



# NAVY NEWS

FEBRUARY 2012

## 'A STIRRING MEMORY'

CHANNEL DASH  
COMMEMORATIVE  
SUPPLEMENT

## OLYMPIC SHIELD

MARINES  
PRACTISE  
2012 GAMES  
MISSION

# COLD CALLING

BRACKETED by 'berg bits' HMS Montrose ventures to the limits at which a Type 23 frigate can operate – the Antarctic ice pack – on the latest stage of her South Atlantic deployment. See page 19 for details.  
Picture: LA(Phot) James Crawford, FRPU West







AS THE Royal Navy's operations in 2012 get under way in earnest, we thought we'd take our lead in our monthly round-up from the new recruiting advert which emphasises the Senior Service's 'kit'...

**New kit:** The Type 45 era begins in earnest with **HMS Daring** departing on her maiden deployment. The destroyer is east-of-Suez-bound, paying a brief visit to Gibraltar where she exercised with **HMS Scimitar**, before continuing to the Middle East (see opposite).

**Kit that shoots:** Flares and bullets were fired by an **815 NAS Lynx** operating from **RFA Fort Victoria** – but it took a boarding team of Royal Marines to finally force 13 suspected pirates to surrender in another blow struck to modern-day buccaneers in the Gulf of Aden (see page 4).

**Kit that hunts:** All four Bahrain-based minehunters – **Pembroke**, **Ramsey**, **Quorn** and **Middleton** – have been involved in exercises with local and visiting naval forces in the Gulf (see right).

**Quiet kit:** **HMS Turbulent's** lengthy patrol east of Suez ended with a musical serenade as the boat received a surprise visit from the Military Wives Choir (see page 5).

**Cold kit:** **HMS Montrose's** South Atlantic deployment took her to the limits at which a Type 23 frigate can operate – within sight of the Antarctic pack ice (see page 19).

**Kit that flies:** **Wildcat** – the next-generation Lynx – has made its debut on the back of a Royal Navy warship. The prototype – and its launchpad, **HMS Iron Duke** – are writing the operating manual for the helicopter right now in the Channel (see page 7).

**Old kit that flies:** At the other end of the aircraft age spectrum, one of the Navy's oldest – and most battle-hardened – helicopters, **Sea King ZA298**, aka 'The King of the Jungles', has been restored to front-line duties after being badly damaged in Afghanistan (see page 8).

**Fast kit:** RIBs, Offshore Raiding Craft and landing craft of **539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines** raced along the Thames with an **815 NAS Lynx** overhead during a week's training for their Olympic security mission. Also committed to the ring of steel around the 2012 Games are **HMS Ocean** and **Bulwark** (see page 18).

**Kit that never sleeps:** If you've ever wondered what a typical 24 hours in the life of a warship on deployment are like, the men and women of **HMS Somerset** – returning to Devonport in just a few days after chasing pirates for the past six months – have obliged with a comprehensive diary (see the centre pages). The frigate has also been in Tanzania to celebrate the African state's 50 years of independence (see page 7).

**The people behind the kit:** All the technology and firepower counts for nought without the men and women operating it. The best and the bravest – including Libyan-campaign veterans **HMS Liverpool**, reservist **AEM Michelle Ping** who saved a soldier's life under enemy fire, the green berets of **42 Commando**, and rescuer **PO Mike Henson** – were honoured at the Sun Military Awards (see pages 9 and 15).

**Kit that inspires:** This month marks the 70th anniversary of the greatest act of self-sacrifice in the Fleet Air Arm's history when all six Swordfish of **825 NAS** sent to stop the breakout of German capital ships – the so-called Channel Dash – were shot down. Their deeds are commemorated with a series of events (see page 8) and our special supplement.

**Kit that was lost:** Also after 70 years, marine archaeologists have found the wreck of **HMS Olympus**, sunk off Malta; it was one of the worst submarine losses of World War 2 (see page 8).

**More kit that flies:** And finally, for those who (rightly) bemoan the dearth of fixed-wing flying in today's Royal Navy, allow **HMS Liverpool** to fill the gap... The ship became home (briefly) to a panoply of rare feathered friends during her mission off Libya (see page 20).

# Konnichiwa, howdy and as salamu alaykum

THREE of the Navy's minehunting quartet in the Gulf joined their American and Japanese counterparts for the first combined exercise together in two decades.

HMS Pembroke was the UK's initial contributor to Unified Shield, a large exercise involving US minesweepers, Gladiators and Dextrous, Japan's Tsushima, and the 8,000-tonne minesweeper support ship Uraga.

It fell to the Sandown-class ship to lead the quintet to sea for the first week of the fortnight-long exercise.

Once in the open waters of the Gulf, a successful set of combined manoeuvres involving the five ships, overseen by Pembroke, allowed the respective navies to integrate at a basic level before commencing co-ordinated mine countermeasures training in the second week.

A week of combined exercises and serials (including in-company navigation, exchanges of personnel between ships, mine hunting and recovery procedures, diving, and communications exercises) kept the ships busy, with each taking it in turn to take the lead.

As a 'first' between Japanese and UK mine warfare units, Pembroke 'rafted' alongside the Uraga – basically 'parking' next to the Japanese ship in the middle of the sea – to prove the British ship could take fuel or stores from her Japanese colleague.

Despite an early morning start, both ship's companies were up, ready and raring to pull off the challenging piece of seamanship. As a result, Pembroke glided effortlessly into place to allow Uraga literally to 'take the reins' of the minehunter's ropes.

Once complete, there was just time for the Royal Navy sailors to pass a bottle of red over the guardrails for Uraga's commanding officer – complete

with a Pembroke cap tally.

"Very few of our Japanese counterparts in Tsushima and Uraga speak English – and certainly no-one aboard Pembroke speaks Japanese," said Pembroke's navigator S/Lt Martyn Mayger.

"In saying that, however, it has not presented a problem. The ability of the Japanese to integrate with us and our American allies at sea was very impressive.

"Everything from their communication skills through to their ship handling and seamanship abilities was top class."

The group were joined in week two of Unified Shield by two more of Britain's Bahrain-based minehunters, Ramsey and Quorn with the focus being on mine warfare training. Being very warm and shallow, the Gulf provides particularly testing waters for minehunters to train their crews.

"This is the first time in twenty years that Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force, US Navy and Royal Navy minehunters have operated here together, so the exercise was a fantastic opportunity to see how two other world-class navies work when faced by the challenging environmental conditions in which we train," said Pembroke's CO, Lt Cdr Richard Hutchings.

Unified Shield's not been the only interesting international exercise for the Bahrain-based force recently. Ramsey and Middleton made the short journey north to Jubail where they found some familiar-looking ships waiting for them.

Jubail is home to the Royal Saudi Naval Forces Eastern Fleet, including the Al Jawf-class of minehunters – Sandowns built for the Kingdom in the mid-90s.

Proceedings began with a lunch and conference hosted aboard Middleton – as a Hunt-class, the only non-Sandown present.

The sea phase opened with a series of manoeuvres involving two Al Jawfs and the British vessels speeding past each other at close range thanks to careful handling.

The aim was to hone the skills of the respective navies and demonstrate the RN's mine disposal system Seafox – used to successfully destroy underwater ordnance off Libya last year – to the Saudis, who are currently in the middle of giving their minehunters a mid-life update.

As the weather worsened, Middleton played the role of a 'vessel in distress' and drifted whilst HMS Al Kharj provided assistance in the form of a tow, demonstrating the ability of two professional navies to work together.

"I was really impressed at how quickly the Saudis connected up the tow. They were really fast and did a great job in some pretty rough weather conditions," said AB(D) 'Buster' Brown.

'Pretty rough weather' is a bit of typical RN understatement; the four ships experienced some of the fiercest winds many sailors have experienced in the Gulf as 60-knot squalls blew through, which put paid to many later serials.

Upon conclusion of the exercise, Middleton and Ramsey conducted a sail past and courtesy salute to the Saudi's Eastern Fleet headquarters before proceeding back out to sea for some gunnery practice on the way back to base in Bahrain.

"The opportunity to work with the Royal Saudi Navy has been superb," said Middleton's CO, Lt Cdr Andrew Ingham.

"My crew have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and are delighted to have had the chance to demonstrate what we can do working together. Saudi Arabia is an important regional partner for the UK and we look forward to maintaining and building upon the relationships forged during our valuable time in company."



## 'The marines have lost a brother'

ROYAL Marines are once again mourning the loss of a fellow green beret with the death of Capt Tom Jennings, three days before Christmas 2011.

The vehicle the officer was travelling in south of Kabul struck a bomb which fatally injured him and also killed his companion, interpreter RAF Sqn Ldr Anthony Downing.

Twenty-nine-year-old Capt Jennings was described as a true leader, selfless in his professional approach, serving those who were his responsibility.

"Dedicated and humble, he was an archetypal Royal Marine with a keen sense of humour even when faced with adversity.

"Whilst working with the Afghan forces that he partnered, he displayed empathy and a broad cultural understanding that ensured he was highly valued by the Afghans as well as his Royal Marine brothers."

Outside the Corps, the young officer was devoted to his wife and their two young sons; the family said their loss could not be portrayed in words.

A spokesman for the green berets said: "The Royal Marines have lost a brother, they have lost their world."



# Great expectations

**T**HE torch has been passed to a new generation of Royal Navy warships as the very first Type 45 destroyer sailed on her maiden deployment.

Seen here through one of the embrasures in Portsmouth's historic sea defences, HMS Daring makes her way out of harbour on active service for the first time – 11 years after she was ordered, nine years after the first steel was cut, six years since she was launched into an icy Clyde and three years after she made her debut in the Solent.

She departed for the troubled waters east of Suez to maintain the Navy's long-term presence there.

Daring sailed with her 200-plus ship's company – her normal complement has been bolstered by a specialist Royal Marines boarding team from the Fleet Protection Group – eager to show off what has been hailed as one of the most advanced warships in the world.

Roughly eight in every ten pieces of kit aboard Daring are new to the Royal Navy. Fired up in the Channel, her radar can track most air traffic over the UK – it can follow aircraft approaching Charles de Gaulle in Paris, Schipol in Amsterdam, Manchester, Edinburgh. As for her Sea Viper – the missile system around which she is built – it can down a target the size of a cricket ball travelling at three times the speed of sound.

All of which is why the ship's company use superlatives like 'Starship Enterprise', 'Porsche' and 'staggeringly capable' to describe her.

"We know that Daring is more capable than anything which has gone to sea before," said navigator Lt Will Blackett.

"This ship was designed for anything – and is ready for anything.

"There are mixed emotions, of course. We will be away from home for seven months. But there's also that sense of excitement. I've been on board for 20 months, I've gone through seeing the ship go from something on trials and training to a warship ready to go. Deployment is the reward for all our effort."

Daring is the first of six £1bn warships, four of which have been handed over to the Royal Navy, with three ready for front-line duties.

She is taking over from frigate HMS Argyll on a varied mission from counter piracy and safeguarding sea lanes, to working with the nation's allies and flying the flag for the best of British.

2011 was largely dominated by training, trials and tweaks. The ship fired her Sea Viper for the first time off Scotland in May, was fitted with Phalanx automated guns over the summer, and underwent two months of Operational Sea Training in the autumn.

The latter test, carried out under the auspices of the world-renowned Flag Officer Sea Training organisation, saw the final tick in the box: ready to deploy.

Given recent tensions in the Gulf region, the media made something of a fuss over Daring's departure; her deployment there, however, has been planned for a good six months or more.

And as her Commanding Officer Capt Guy Robinson points out, the Gulf is "a volatile region" – which is why there's been a long-term Royal Navy presence there.

"We cannot predict what might occur – it would be foolish to speculate. You only have to look back to what happened around the world in 2011," he added.

"As far as the Navy is concerned, this is a routine deployment. To deploy Daring herself for the first time is far from routine of course, taking a ship of this complexity away from the UK for seven months.

"There's been a year of hard work getting her ready. Now is the chance to show what we can do. This ship is staggeringly capable – she stands alongside the best in the world."

Chief caterer CPO 'Bill' Bailey, beginning his first deployment in the surface fleet after a career in submarines, says there's a "great camaraderie on board".

"You step across the brow of Daring and you're proud to serve in her. That shows all over.

"These have been exciting times, the build up for this, getting her ready. We're very aware that we'll be showing what the ship can do."

The first chance to show what Daring can do came a few days later when she made her debut in Gibraltar.

The Rock was shrouded in mist and rain when the destroyer entered harbour – joining Mediterranean-bound minehunter HMS Ledbury (*see page 4*) in the naval base.

Despite getting a drenching as he safely guided his ship alongside, Capt Robinson said that "seeing the Rock as you sail in is a sight you never forget, and always one you welcome seeing.

"Gibraltar is an iconic place to visit – a place held dearly in people's hearts. You could not enter the Mediterranean without stopping here."

Once alongside in the shadow of The Tower (or was it The Tower in the shadow of Daring given the height of her main mast, more than 100ft above the waterline?), the ship hosted a reception for the Rock's leaders.

Among those shown aboard Daring (dubbed a '*superdestroyer*' – super destroyer – by the Spanish press across the border) were Gibraltar's Chief Minister Fabian Picardo and the territory's governor, Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns (who knows quite a bit about Type 45s as his wife Susie is the sponsor of HMS Diamond).

The ship also hosted visits from local schools, Air Cadets, the Sea Scouts and the Royal Gibraltar Association.

No visit to Gibraltar is complete without the Navy's traditional 'Rock race' – from the dockyard to the top of the Rock of Gibraltar, with the ship's physical training instructor LPT Simon Radford spurring the men and women on.

"The race was really well attended by the ship's company – despite the very early start," said Simon. "There were some very tired-looking people at the top – but luckily there were no proper casualties."

The stay in Gib was all too brief. After just a couple of days, the destroyer resumed her deployment – with a little help from the Gibraltar Squadron.

Long before Daring cast off, HMS Scimitar – one of the squadron's two fast patrol boats – sailed to conduct a security sweep of the Western Anchorage accompanied by an Arctic 24 RIB.

An hour or so later, bang on schedule, Daring left 41 berth and conducted a stern-first passage through the southern entrance, which had already been cleared by Scimitar and the RIB.

When the destroyer had safely reached the limit of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, Daring and Scimitar moved into the next part of their morning's work – a force protection exercise in which Scimitar would simulate various attacks on the destroyer.

Small, fast and manoeuvrable, Scimitar and her sister Sabre are well able to simulate a waterborne terrorist attack and are regularly used by deploying ships for this type of continuation training.

It quickly became apparent to Scimitar's crew that Daring's pre-deployment training had ensured her force protection teams were highly 'worked up' in a ship which is well equipped to defend herself.

Despite the best efforts of Scimitar's two gun aimers, D32 successfully deterred the mock attacks and the exercise was completed with the Type 45 disappearing into the Mediterranean sunshine on her journey eastward.



picture: po(phot) paul punter, frpu east



## More praise for Liverpool

FOR the final couple of months of her long and illustrious career, the trophy cabinet of HMS Liverpool positively bulges thanks to her exploits off Libya last year.

No British warship was involved longer in the campaign to support the free peoples of Libya, pummelling pro-Gaddafi shore batteries, directing the strike missions of NATO aircraft and helping to draw a dragnet across the Gulf of Sirte to prevent arms reaching Libya's then dictator.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer, which decommissions next month after just shy of 30 years' service, spent more than six months in support of Operation Ellamy.

Her sustained actions in the Med have rightly earned her the Fleet Destroyer Effectiveness Award which was handed over to a delighted Commanding Officer, Cdr Colin Williams, by Rear Admiral Duncan Potts, Rear Admiral Surface Ships.

"I am immensely proud of being part of this tight-knit family of hard-working professional mariners. We have proved the versatility and fortitude of the men and women of this ship's company – and the Royal Navy," said Cdr Williams.

"I am privileged to accept this award on behalf of my ship's company for their outstanding efforts throughout the course of last year, be it successful training, High Seas Firing and, of course, our participation in events off Libya."

Thanks to her impressive gunnery feats *inter alia*, Liverpool was also presented with the Grytviken Above Water Warfare Trophy (presented to CPO(AWW) Darren Acres on behalf of his shipmates).

And just for good measure the comms department earned the Communications Award (presented to PO(CIS)s Scott Blackburn and Paul McQueer)

All these trophies are in addition to the special award the Crazy Red Chicken received at The Sun Military Awards just before Christmas... and the Desmond Wettern media award for the best frigate or destroyer projecting a positive image of the Senior Service... and she was runner-up in the electronic warfare trophy.

After a spell alongside for maintenance and leave for her 240-strong ship's company, Liverpool has resumed her duties for the final few weeks of her active career.

She spent five days on the Thames in London at the end of last month, will be in her namesake city from February 29 until March 5 for an emotional farewell, and is due to join much of the Fleet, Royal Marines and Fleet Air Arm in northern Norway for the regular Cold Response Arctic war games. Throughout she'll proudly fly the Fleet Destroyer Effectiveness flag.

Her career under the White Ensign formally comes to an end on March 30 with a decommissioning ceremony in Portsmouth Naval Base.

## Knights to the rescue

ALL ten souls aboard the sinking pleasure boat Princess Melisa were plucked to safety by the crew of the tanker RFA Wave Knight as they rushed to respond to the boat's mayday call in the dark off Oman.

The tanker, which provides fuel and sustenance to Royal Navy and other Coalition warships operating in the region, found the 70ft boat taking on water and in danger of capsizing in rough seas after her hull was holed.

Wave Knight's boat recovered the captain and his nine crew of Indians and Kenyans, all a little shell-shocked by their ordeal.

They were subsequently transferred to an Omani Coast Guard vessel off the country's north-east coast.

Picture: LA(Phot) Kyle Heller, FRPU East



# Fort Victoria delivers another clear message

**A LYNX fires flares over a mother ship as a chase to bring the criminal activities of one pirate action group to an end reaches a dramatic conclusion.**

The 13 men in the dhow ignored the flares. They ignored shots across the bow from the commando snipers in the back of the helicopter; fountains of water flew up into the air as bursts from the guns rippled into the Indian Ocean ahead of the vessel.

They did not ignore two boats crammed with heavily-armed Royal Marines commandos who made their intentions very clear.

And thus did RFA Fort Victoria strike another blow against Somali pirates in the ongoing international naval effort to curb modern-day buccaneering.

Support ship Fort Vic is home to a specialist Royal Navy counter-piracy task force and is operating under the banner of NATO's counter-piracy mission, Operation Ocean Shield.

She and American destroyer USS Carney were sent to investigate a dhow which was believed to be in the hands of pirates and had been sailing in Indian Ocean shipping lanes.

In a combined show of force, both RFA Fort Victoria and USS Carney manoeuvred towards the dhow, with the aim of encouraging her to comply with the counter-piracy forces.

These actions should have been intimidating, given the size of the two military vessels – the American destroyer bristles with firepower, while Fort Victoria is more than 650ft long, weighs 32,000 tonnes and carries a specially-trained commando boarding team – but the pirates were determined to carry on with their activities.

That led to more forceful action from Fort Vic, which sent her Lynx aloft.

When even that failed to deter the action group – a dhow with a small skiff in tow – Royal Marines in RIBs boarded the mother ship.

The pirates surrendered as the commandos secured control and rounded them up on the forecastle: 13 Somali pirates were found to be on board together with a selection of weapons.

"The moment of going on board the dhow was tense as we knew there were pirates on board who had refused to stop despite our warning shots," said Capt James Sladden RM,

Officer in Charge of the Fleet Standby Rifle Squadron aboard Fort Victoria.

"Through our weapon sights we could see there were about 13 pirates, mostly gathered in the area of the bridge. We quickly boarded and secured the vessel before mustering the pirates on the bow."

Capt Gerry Northwood, the naval officer heading the task force on Fort Vic, said the "firm and positive action" his team had taken "will send a clear message to other Somali pirates that we will not tolerate their attacks on international shipping."

The capture of the dhow was the second success in four days for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary force.

Earlier that same week, the one-stop supply ship made sure there was no way into the major shipping lanes for the Liquid Velvet, a large chemical tanker from which Somali pirates could have launched attacks on passing merchantmen.

The 12,000-tonne vessel was seized by pirates in November last year – since when the 23 crew have been held for ransom; their captors have asked for as much as £5m (US \$8m) for their release.

In mid-January pirates forced the crew to put the vessel to sea to use it as a mother ship.

It got 90 miles from the Somali coast before Fort Vic intercepted it.

The auxiliary repeatedly circled the Liquid Velvet to push her back and also sent up her Lynx helicopter as both a deterrent and to assess the situation on board.

Once Liquid Velvet had returned to her anchorage RFA Fort Victoria stayed in the immediate area to ensure the pirates, who were armed with machine guns and rifles, did not make another attempt to sail out.

"Once the pirates were stopped there was never a chance that they were going to achieve anything as we could take down any efforts they made," Capt Northwood explained.

"This was a potential mother ship in terms of it having enough pirate paraphernalia on board to launch attacks on other ships in the area.

"We have been putting the pirates under a lot of pressure by taking down their dhow action groups so they are starting to get desperate."

He continued: "It was a risky decision to sail Liquid Velvet out as it is currently in the latter

stages of ransom negotiation.

"While it is a good platform for them to cover a lot of ground to find another mother ship, if they were to lose the ship to us then they would be out of pocket in a big way.

"This was a very successful operation – if we had not intercepted Liquid Velvet when we had, then these pirates would have posed a very real threat to international shipping in the Indian Ocean."

Liquid Velvet remains in the hands of the pirates, sadly.

Not so the dhow liberated by Fort Victoria following the sea chase with the Carney.

Just days after being in the clutch of pirates, it was handed over to the Yemeni authorities to return to its rightful owner.

The dhow had belonged to 27-year-old Awadh Barasheed from Mukalla, one of Yemen's principal ports. The catches it brought in supported not just Mr Barasheed's family, but those of his brothers as well.

It fell into the hands of pirates last May, since when it had been held at a known pirate camp – and made forays into the Gulf of Aden.

"I would like to thank the Coalition Forces and specifically the British Navy (Royal Navy) for retrieving my dhow from the hands of the criminal pirates," said Mr Barasheed. "This dhow is the only source of income for me, my brothers and our families."

His boat was handed over to his agent and the captain of Yemeni Navy ship 1031 in international waters in the Gulf of Aden, while the chairman of the Dhows Owners Association of Mukalla, Saleh Bayumain, passed on his gratitude to the Royal Navy-Royal Marines-Royal Fleet Auxiliary team aboard Fort Vic – not just for liberating this craft, but for the ongoing efforts to strangle the piracy scourge.

He thanked the "dedicated and noble crew members" of the "British Naval Ship"

He continued: "My thanks also extends to all the maritime forces who patrol the area and fight piracy, they have helped us on many occasions and provided help in terms of food, water, fuel and mechanical support."

That wider effort brought considerable successes last month; over a ten day period in mid-January, five pirate groups were disrupted in the Gulf of Aden, while more than 50 suspected pirates face the prospect of prosecution for their alleged actions.



# Westminster 'itching to get going'

CHASING pirates and keeping the sea lanes east of Suez open for the next seven months is the Navy's 'capital ship': HMS Westminster.

The frigate left Portsmouth in late January to relieve her sister, HMS Somerset, which has been away from home since the late summer of 2011 – and has scored some notable successes against pirates.

Westminster headed to the Middle East and Indian Ocean battle-hardened from her experiences during her most recent deployment.

Ten months ago, the ship sailed at very short notice during the opening days of the Libyan Civil War; she was called upon to support the UN Security Council's embargo on arms to the Gaddafi regime and prevent the dictator's navy sortie up the coast to bombard towns and civilians.

Since then the frigate has undergone a couple of months of rigorous pre-deployment training off Plymouth in some pretty

challenging weather conditions as 2011 drew to a close.

Many of the ship's company who deploy to the Middle East are still on board from the mission off Libya, including Operations Officer Lt Cdr Andy Brown.

"We learned a lot last year on our successful involvement in the Libyan operations and we will carry that experience forward to our next mission," he said.

"The ship's company are excited about the deployment ahead and we are all determined to make it a success." Her Commanding Officer, Capt Nick Hine, added: "It takes a tremendous amount of effort to get a complex and sophisticated warship ready for operations and I am extremely proud of my ship's company for the work they have done in getting us to this point; but operations are what the Royal Navy is all about and we are itching to get going.

"We sail into a region of heightened tensions and great challenges and we are ready and up for it."



## Mine mission for Ledbury

WHILE HMS Daring enjoyed most of the media coverage (and not a little wild speculation), the first ship to deploy in 2012 slipped out of Portsmouth Harbour two days before the 45's departure.

HMS Ledbury opened the Royal Navy's account for the year by sailing to take her place alongside similar allied vessels in a NATO mine warfare force in the Mediterranean.

The force – Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 2 – is sailing the length and breadth of the Middle Sea practising the art of hunting mines and other underwater explosive devices.

It is practice which paid off in full in 2011. The last time a Portsmouth-based minehunter – HMS Brocklesby – served with the NATO force she found herself 'in the thick of it', clearing mines for real off Libya to keep the sea lanes to Misrata open (and, lest we forget, Faslane's HMS Bangor replaced her later in the conflict and performed similarly sterling work).

With the Libyan mission now over, the group will resume its more usual mission – a mixture of exercising, goodwill visits in a multitude of ports on the Mediterranean shore including stops in Italy, Spain, Greece and Morocco, and the hunt for historic ordnance left by wars past.

To prepare for her role with the NATO force, Ledbury spent much of 2011 in training. The 31-year-old Hunt came out of a maintenance period in March then went through the rigours of Operational Sea Training – which prepared the 40-plus ship's company for deployment.

More recently, the ship joined British and international warships for a two-week war game in north-west Scotland, Exercise Joint Warrior, and found time to reaffirm bonds built up over the past three decades with her namesake town in Herefordshire.

## You'll need to Klingon in these seas...

HAVING left the UK in November, survey ship HMS Enterprise is now enjoying the experience of an austral summer as she updates charts of the South Atlantic.

We use the term 'enjoying' loosely, for the waters in the hemisphere of the penguin aren't kind, even in summertime.

The Devonport-based hydrographic vessel is gathering a wealth of data from the Southern Ocean, eventually feeding it back to Taunton, where Admiralty Charts are produced – the world-standard guides for seafarers.

Before there could be any thought of collecting information, however, the ship had to 'tie in' tide gauges – it can be likened to the zero on a ruler and is key to giving data a baseline so that it can be matched to existing information.

With everything set, the Navy's star ship (sorry) began collecting bathymetric data in earnest, aided by up to 18 hours of daylight at the height of summer at such southern latitudes.

"Once it starts you really get an appreciation of just how much data is collected by the ship as it 'hoovers' up the returning multibeam echo sounder pings," explained Lt Tim Hall RNZN, one of Enterprise's hydrographic officers. "The only thing that can stop us is the weather..."

Which didn't take too long in the South Atlantic...

"Within four hours the wind and sea can go from calm and pleasant to near-gale conditions, lumpy seas and stormy skies.

"The four-metre waves soon proved too much even for our sophisticated data-gathering suite and we sought the shelter of harbour – so too it would seem had a pod of killer whales."



## Divers ready for new Afghan task

FOR the first time Royal Navy explosive experts will work alongside their Army and RAF comrades in 'high-threat' bomb disposal teams in Afghanistan.

Lt Cdr Al Nekreus will head a four-strong specialist team in Helmand, with fellow diver LS(D) Craig Warhorn, plus two soldiers.

The two men, based at Horsea Island in Portsmouth, have just completed training and now deploy on one of the most demanding six-month tours of duty imaginable.

High-threat operators deal with the more advanced homemade bombs located by troops.

They work as part of the Counter Improvised Explosive Device (IED) task force in Afghanistan alongside specialist search teams, who are able to identify and isolate devices, specially-trained search dogs, and can call upon a wealth of specialist equipment.

Until recently, the high-threat team comprised solely of members of the Royal Logistics Corps. More recently, RAF technicians have also qualified.

"I am immensely proud to be the first from the Royal Navy to carry out that role," said 39-year-old Lt Cdr Nekreus.

"It will be a long way from the marine environment we are used to working in, so it's a hugely challenging role but I'm looking forward to getting out there and getting the job done."

He added: "The Royal Logistics Corps high-threat operators are the best in the world so working alongside them will be a great experience."

LS(D) Waghorn, 28, added: "The role of bomb disposal ultimately saves the lives of our serving personnel so it'll be good to be part of a team that can make a real difference."

"It's great for the Navy's Clearance Diving Branch and the Royal Navy as a whole that we now have this specialist high-threat bomb disposal capability."

Closer to home, Scottish-based divers have also singled out for work sung and unsung.

Crucial work in the highly-publicised Celtic postal bombs investigation and the key forensic follow-up is just one reason why the **Northern Diving Group** from Faslane won the Diving Unit Effectiveness Trophy for 2011.

The safe disposal of those devices formed just one of 120 explosive ordnance call-outs that the team responded to last year.

They also dealt with numerous sea mines, including two of WW2 vintage in Aberdeen and the Firth of Forth.

Another notable success was the safe removal and disposal of 144 highly-volatile wartime phosphorous grenades from a community centre in Wick.

Their specialist skills were put to the test with the delicate recovery of a misfired Seafox round. This key piece of kit is used by RN minehunters to neutralise mines and other unexploded ordnance in the oceans.

And, in support of the nuclear deterrent, they were airlifted to a nuclear submarine in the Atlantic, working non-stop for 36 hours to free a fouled propulsor, allowing the submarine to return on patrol as quickly as possible.

On the Eastern Seaboard of the USA, they also carried out crucial work on the navy's newest submarine, HMS Astute.

The team also performed the hallowed task of replacing the ensign on the wreck of sunken battleship HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow in the Orkneys.

"2011 was a hard year – but a very satisfying one. The men and their support staff have faced up to every challenge with resolve and skill," said CO Lt Cdr Kevin Stockton.

"They are a very talented team and it is an honour to be their Commanding Officer."



● The choir squeezes into Triumph's tight wardroom (Shhh, don't tell CO Cdr Ryan Ramsey someone's nicked his cap...) and (inset) LET Tim Forth is reunited with his wife – and choral singer – Victoria

Pictures: LA(Phot) Rob Gillies, FRPU West

# Harmony beneath the sea

**THE submariners of HMS Turbulent returned home from a nine-month tour of duty – to a surprise serenade from the Military Wives Choir.**

Eleven members of the choir – who took the Christmas No.1 spot ahead of *X-Factor* winners Little Mix – squeezed aboard Turbs in Plymouth Sound as the boat sailed into Devonport following 267 days away.

In recognition of the accomplishments of the 130 submariners, the choir performed their chart-topper *Wherever You Are* in the cramped confines of the Trafalgar-class boat in Plymouth Sound for the very final moments of the hunter-killer submarine's deployment.

The visit was kept secret from the deeps – especially one of them because his wife is one of the now-famous choir.

LET Tim Forth was therefore completely taken aback when his singing wife Victoria and her ten fellow choristers burst into song when he was ordered into the submarine's control room by his superiors.

The war-fighting centre of HMS Turbulent became an instant temporary concert hall when the choir performed for the shocked engineer and his shipmates.

Victoria said of the emotional reunion with her husband: "It is amazing. It has been five months since I saw Tim at home. This is not just for me and Tim it is for all the lads on board."

"They do covert operations and this means they are largely unrecognised. So this is one way of showing them that we appreciate their work, as well as showing how happy we are that they are back."

Victoria and Tim are from Plymstock, Plymouth, and have two boys Christian, 21 months and William aged three and a half.

"It's fantastic to have him home. He's missed so much of Christian's short life. But he did come back for a short visit. Both boys have changed so much," said Victoria.

Now we said in last month's edition that HMS Ocean was the last vessel home from Operation Ellamy, Britain's involvement in the Libyan mission; not so, for Turbs was on patrol in the Med for several weeks between two stints off Libya by her sister HMS Triumph.

Unlike Triumph, Turbulent wasn't called upon to launch Tomahawk missile strikes – but she did assist in enforcing the United Nations embargo on Libyan shipping movements.

Much of the T-boat's patrol in the near and Middle East was featured in the Channel 5 Series *Royal Navy Submarine Mission* (still available on Youtube if you missed it); the TV crew were given unparalleled access to a Royal Navy boat on active operations.

The submarine's Commanding Officer Cdr Ryan Ramsey said the experience of featuring in a television documentary had been "amazing, but after the camera crew left, the most exciting challenges started."

During Turbulent's time away, 85 per cent of it was spent at sea with 190 days dived and 50 on the surface.

The submarine travelled more than 38,000 miles, conducted a variety of challenging submarine missions in the region and found time to train more than 70 new submariners from other units and raise over £7,000 for the charity Children's Hospice South West including a rowing race on an indoor rowing machine on board.

The men onboard all agreed about what they were looking forward to when they returned: seeing their families and friends... and the British weather (they hadn't seen rain for a long time).

Around 100 families and friends braved bad weather to welcome home their loved ones.

They crowded on to the jetty, straining their eyes in the darkness to see the nuclear-powered hunter killer submarine as she came alongside at Devonport Naval Base.

AB(TSM) Alex Mogridge, was met by his fiancée Trish, whom he plans to marry this year, and his father Trevor. Dad said: "It's fantastic to see him come back – we haven't seen him since January."

"We are very proud of him for what he and they have all been doing out there."

LS(TSM) Mark Carlson, of Plymouth, was hugged by his fiancée Lana Helmore and her daughter Ellie, 14. He said: "It was a long but eventful deployment and well worth doing. But the separation from those whom I love is hard."

Lana added: "It's so good to have him back again. It has been hard being separated, rather lonely sometimes. But I have good family support."

Cdr Ramsey summed up ten months away: "We are only one of many Devonport-based submarines who did incredible things in 2011 on behalf of the Royal Navy."

"I am rightly proud of my team who have always delivered despite every challenge, but more importantly I am thankful to our friends and families, many of whom live in the Plymouth area."

"We couldn't do what we need to do without their support. We're glad to be back in Plymouth."

As well as some tearful reunions, Turbulent's return to Devonport permitted the belated presentation of a trophy her crew had earned 12 months earlier.

The boat's lengthy patrol made it impossible for the boat to

receive the Valiant Trophy until finally alongside in Devon again.

The award, sponsored by Rolls-Royce (who build the reactors which drive the Silent Service's entire fleet of nuclear submarines), recognises the efforts by the 130 souls aboard during Operational Sea Training.

That training prepared the hunter-killer for her exacting deployment.

According to the citation, the

boat's "focused leadership at all levels, comprehensive preparation, a strong self-training culture and the absolute commitment she displayed were all winning attributes".

Jerry Hall, Rolls-Royce's Director of Operations Submarines, presented Cdr Ramsey with the trophy – and also handed over a cheque for £1,000 to the boat's welfare fund.

As for Turbulent herself, she's undergoing a spot of maintenance in her home port before conducting what will be her final deployment later this year.

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● (Left to right) Crew of the USS John C Stennis salute the First Sea Lord as he arrives aboard via a 'COD' plane; French marines demonstrate an AMX 10 tank for 3 Cdo's Brig Martin Smith; the men of 9 BLBMA with their trademark kepis salute Brig Smith

# International arrivals

BRITAIN'S most senior sailor flew on to one of the most powerful warships in the world for a first-hand look at front-line carrier operations.

It's one of a series of visits and meetings involving senior commanders – stepping stones to large-scale future exercises and operations by the Navy's capital ships and amphibious forces.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope joined the USS John C Stennis, a 100,000-ton leviathan supporting operations in Afghanistan, to help pave the way for Britain's next-generation carriers.

Her Majesty's Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, currently under construction, will

be the largest warships ever to fly the White Ensign – and signal a return to traditional carrier operations.

Unlike the current generation of Invincible-class carriers, the sisters use catapults and arrestor gear ('cats and traps' in Fleet Air Arm parlance) to launch and land aircraft, rather than ski ramps and vertical landings as embodied by the Harrier jump jet.

'Cats and traps' is what the Americans do with aplomb. The Stennis operates F18 Super Hornet strike fighters as well as propeller-drive aircraft and helicopters – up to 90 aircraft in all.

The carrier is also home to one Fleet Air Arm aviator, Lt 'LOThAR' Collins ('Loser of the American Revolution', a call sign given him by his American

comrades), who's flying a single-seat F18 strike fighter from the Stennis' deck with the 'Tophatters' (Strike Fighter Squadron 14) on missions over Afghanistan.

Lt Collins is one of numerous Royal Navy pilots flying with the Americans. Their experiences will be crucial as the Senior Service looks to re-learn the art of carrier strike operations ahead of Her Majesty's Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales entering service later this decade.

Queen Elizabeth – Britain's first traditional aircraft carrier since Ark Royal IV which was paid off in the late 1970s – is taking shape on the Forth (she'll be assigned her first member of the ship's company later this year).

The carrier programme has already devoured more than one million working hours in yards

and factories across the land building equipment and sections of the ship.

Hand-in-hand with the construction of the sisters, there is a wealth of lessons to be learnt in terms of both the complexity of the flight deck and hangar choreography as well as the command and control that comes with combining fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

With that in mind during a recent visit to Royal Navy units and personnel in the Gulf, Admiral Stanhope joined the US Navy's Rear Admiral Craig Faller, Commander of US Carrier Strike Group 3, aboard the Stennis.

No aircraft carrier experience would be complete however without the live launch and recovery of fast jets, and what better way to gain a first hand perspective of the utility of carrier strike than from the cockpit?

In the experienced hands of Cdr Vorrice 'Heavy' Burks USN (Commanding Officer of the 'Black Aces' – Strike Fighter Squadron 71), Admiral Stanhope proceeded to "kick the tyres and light the fires", strap himself into the back of a twin-seat F18 and accelerate off the front end.

Safely recovered, and having "buzzed the tower", Admiral Stanhope reflected on his experiences aboard the flat-top:

"Being catapulted from 0-150 knots in a couple of seconds is certainly a tick in the 'Taskbook of Life'."

"We know carrier aviation is a hugely-complex business and we will get there again; the Royal Navy will once more be able to project an unhindered fixed-wing strike capability anywhere that the government wants UK power and influence to be felt."

THERE wasn't quite such a dramatic demonstration for 3 Commando Brigade's ranking officer – but he did get the chance to trundle around France in a tank.

Later this year Brig Martin Smith and his green berets will be working side-by-side with their French counterparts.

With that goal in mind, the senior officer headed across the Channel to spend two days with 9e Brigade Légère Blindée de Marine (9 BLBMA) and reinvigorate the long-standing relations between the two corps which go back to the mid-90s.

The aim is to develop the two countries' Combined Joint Expeditionary Force which will see the UK's Response Force Task

Group and Lead Commando Group link up with the carrier FS Charles de Gaulle and a French assault ship with elements of 9 BLBMA embarked.

Last autumn, HMS Bulwark hosted 130 troops and kit from 2nd Marine Infantry Regiment (2RIMA) for exercises in and around north-west Scotland; the French marines found working with the 'Rosbifs' "a fantastic experience".

There will be more link-ups in 2012 ahead of the autumn exercise. During his visit to France, Brig Smith and his French opposite number, Gen François Lecointre, Commandant 9 BLBMA, discussed and formalised their combined activity for 2012, culminating in the signing of a letter of intent.

That combined activity will include a number of training exercises at troop and company level as well as developing the two corps' doctrines, procedures and communications leading up to the exercise for UK/French maritime and land forces during the Royal Navy's Cougar 12 deployment.

"This visit has provided a timely opportunity to reinvigorate a most productive relationship between our two brigades, paving the way for greater integration in 2012," said Brig Smith.

"Gen Lecointre and I recognise that the Cougar 12 deployment will give us an excellent chance to advance the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force concept, and to improve the ability of UK and French forces to operate together in the wake of successful operations off Libya."

9 BLBMA packs a considerable punch for an amphibious formation, including an armoured regiment equipped with the wheeled AMX 10 tank, which Brig Smith inspected during his visit, and 155mm artillery.

Like 3 Commando, the French brigade has benefitted from recent experience of operations in Afghanistan, and has placed a high priority upon reconnaissance and intelligence capabilities, including fully-integrated Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

The original twinning agreement between the brigades was signed in 1995, with both formations benefitting from a variety of cross-training and integration opportunities over the past 16 years and the establishment of exchange officers in the respective headquarters (RM Stonehouse for 3 Commando, Poitiers for 9 BLBMA).

THERE were no fast jets or tanks in Den Helder, just a shared common purpose as amphibious commanders from across the continent looked to work more closely together in future.

The amphibious forces of five European nations – France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and UK – have vowed to share their expertise in amphibious warfare, arguably the most complex military operation there is; throw the international dimension – different equipment, different ways of working and, of course, different tongues into the equation – and the difficulties are multiplied.

Cdre Paddy McAlpine, Commander of the UK Task Group and 3 Commando's Brig Smith met their European peers in the Netherlands to discuss the European Amphibious Initiative with their continental counterparts.

The initiative began a decade ago, seeking to enhance the ability of Europe's armed forces to respond to a developing crisis.

Last year's 'Arab Spring' prompted military staffs to plan possible operations, highlighting once again the need for rapid and effective deployment of amphibious forces.

"By working together better in peacetime – through closer liaison during training – our amphibious forces will operate more effectively in actual operations," said Cdre McAlpine.

"This is where multinational defence co-operation really makes a difference: the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

"The UK's amphibious forces have worked with Allies for many years, particularly the Dutch. This initiative enhances that cooperation, and improves our contribution to both NATO and Europe."

Brig Smith added: "Although amphibious forces of different nations operate together, procedures can differ. This initiative allows us to work better with our allies and helps them to work better with us."

Next month, flagship HMS Bulwark will lead the Royal Navy's input to Cold Response, the regular test of NATO forces in the unforgiving frozen terrain inside the Arctic Circle in Norway, with the green berets working alongside Dutch marines in particular; the Commando Helicopter Force is also heading north to practise its ability to operate at temperatures down to -30°C.

## Royal reward for medics

THE Duchess of Cornwall was due to recognise the contribution made by Naval medics in the sands of Afghanistan when she was in Portsmouth at the end of January.

As Commodore in Chief of Royal Naval Medical Services, she was scheduled to visit HMS Excellent to present surgeons and medics with campaign medals for their selfless actions during Operation Herrick 14.

Three in every four personnel serving with the 257-strong Close Support Medical Regiment on Operation Herrick 14, which ended last autumn, were drawn from the Naval Service – while the

overall British effort was led by 3 Commando Brigade.

The regiment provided combat medics who accompanied troops on some 10,000 foot patrols, while back at base in the main hospital at Camp Bastion, the hub of the British mission in Helmand, they dealt with 3,600 patients during the six-month deployment.

Medics were also deployed to important outlying bases such as Kabul and Kandahar.

As well as presenting medals, the Duchess was due to join personnel and families at a subsequent reception on Whale Island.

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# Wild times on the Iron Duke

**BEING** guided down on to the flight deck of HMS Iron Duke, this is the first appearance of the Fleet Air Arm's next-generation helicopter on the back of a Royal Navy warship.

On a very wet December day, a Wildcat landed aboard the frigate in Portsmouth Harbour for three days of trials in and out of the ship's hangar.

In just three years' time, the fast and potent helicopter will be the mainstay of the Royal Navy's frigate and destroyer operations around the globe, replacing the trusted Lynx which has served the Fleet Air Arm loyally since the mid-70s.

Wildcat might look like a Lynx (with the exception of the distinctive tailplane which provides the pilot with improved stability) and fly like a Lynx, but there the similarities end; it's effectively a brand new aircraft rather than a revamp of the existing helicopter.

And as it's a brand new aircraft, the Wildcat has to go back to basics, laying down the limits within which it can be operated at sea.

With that goal in mind, the helicopter rejoined Iron Duke last month for three weeks of flying on to and off the deck of the Type 23 frigate.

Before there could be any thought of such trials, however, the Wildcat team – from AgustaWestland, the Yeovil firm which builds the Lynx, Ministry of Defence experts, the Aircraft Test and Evaluation Centre at Boscombe Down, plus RN air engineers and technicians – needed to carry out some fundamental checks, hence three days aboard Iron Duke.

Although numerous simulations have been carried out, nothing compensates for doing something for real.

It fell to ex-Fleet Air Arm pilot Martin Dawkins and Lt Cdr Lee Evans from the Rotary Wing Test Squadron to set Wildcat down on the back of Iron Duke – for aviation enthusiasts the model being tested is Trials Installation 3, tail number ZZ402.

As well as landing on the frigate, the team needed to ensure Wildcat could be

moved in and out of the hangar using the ship's helicopter recovery system and (quite importantly) fit in the hangar (it does with a couple of metres to spare), can be refuelled, and can be armed.

All of the above can be done without putting to sea – and saves valuable time when the more rigorous flight tests, known as Ship Helicopter Operating Limits trials (or SHOL), begin.

So far the Wildcat team are impressed by the helicopter's performance.

"It flies like a Lynx which is good from a pilot's point of view. It's stable, it's got one third more power than a Lynx and that gives you much more confidence as a pilot," explained Lt Cdr Evans.

The helicopter has already completed 'hot and high' trials in Colorado in the USA and has flown on to and off RFA Argus at sea.

The current series of trials at sea with Iron Duke began in Lyme Bay before the frigate moved further west, not least to search for rough weather.

The Wildcat team have been gradually increasing the weight/payload – including attaching dummy torpedoes – of Wildcat in different sea, wind and temperature conditions.

They are also testing the helicopter's ability to communicate and share data with the ship's operations room team and command systems.

There are more than 30 people aboard Iron Duke, plus special instrumentation, to assess how Wildcat performs – and the mass of data and readings they record will take around nine months to analyse.

"The science going into the trials is amazing," Lt Cdr Evans enthused.

He's also been looking forward to taking Wildcat to sea in earnest.

"I love this job. It is demanding being a test pilot – you have to keep your eye on the ball. But to be the first test pilot to fly Wildcat at sea is beyond my wildest dreams. Awesome."

Some 62 Wildcats are being bought by the MOD, 34 for the Army Air Corps, 28 for the Fleet Air Arm. The Army variant is due to begin operations in 2014, with the Naval one in service the following year.

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherston, FRPU East



## Independence day for HMS Somerset

FIFTY years of Tanzanian independence were celebrated in style in the east African nation – with a little help from HMS Somerset.

The ship visited Dar Es Salaam, to help locals mark half a century since British rule ended.

The frigate, in the later stages of a maritime security patrol in the Indian Ocean, hosted an official reception on behalf of the British High Commission.

Britain's Minister for International Relations, Stephen O'Brien, stood alongside the Tanzanian Minister of Defence and National Service, the Honourable Doctor Mwinini and Vice Chief of the Tanzanian Defence Force, General Mwamunungu.

Mr O'Brien's speech – made in part in Swahili – warmly acknowledged Tanzania's successes since independence.

There were even more colourful celebrations ashore. The ship's company tried their hand at some native dancing alongside locals while the frigate's CO Cdr Paul Bristowe and his second-in-command, Executive Officer Lt Cdr Ben Aldous, were invited to the 50th anniversary independence event in the National Stadium.

It wasn't all parties and celebrations, however.

As part of the wider effort against criminal activity on the high seas, Somerset's RN Police briefed members of the local military police force.

Guests were invited to an evidence-handling briefing aboard, where the frigate's regulators explained some of the forensic methods they use.

**A day in the life, centre pages**



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## King awesome repair job...

CPO Neil Copeland inspects the pristine lines of Sea King ZA298 – and well he might, for the last time he saw this grand old lady, she was Swiss cheese.

This is ZA298 – hailed by many as the ‘King of the Junglies’ – possibly the most battle-hardened Sea King airborne.

And the fact that this 30-year-old helicopter is airborne once more is testament to painstaking restoration, not a little bravery in the sands of Helmand, and perhaps some luck.

The helicopter was extensively damaged by a rocket-propelled grenade which struck just behind the cockpit – and passed out of the other side of the fuselage.

As well as leaving a rather large hole (pictured right), the rocket slightly injured the door gunner – but otherwise everyone else on board was unharmed in the incident, which occurred when the Sea King set down at a checkpoint in the Nad-e Ali district of Helmand.

CPO Copeland led the effort to recover the aircraft in Afghanistan at the time of the attack in late 2009 – and was at RNAS Yeovilton to finally welcome it home.

“Because the aircraft was to be airlifted from the check point, the mission was extremely challenging as we had to remove a considerable amount of hazardous equipment and fuel from the aircraft to ensure everyone’s safety and to reduce its overall weight,” the senior rating explained.

“We receive military training in theatre for this type of eventuality but working on the rotor head – which was about ten feet above the ground and four feet above the compound wall – certainly concentrated the mind as we were in full view of the terrorists who were responsible for bringing the aircraft down. However the Army did an excellent job in providing cover and ensured we were able to get on with the task in hand.”

Neil, a senior aircraft maintainer, oversaw the move of ZA298 to Camp Bastion and he and his team prepared it for its return to the UK. It was then sent to Vector Aerospace in Gosport, where it was meticulously restored to working order.



He continued: “Looking at the aircraft now you would never know it has suffered such catastrophic damage. Vector Aerospace has done an excellent job.”

Sea Kings are renowned for their resilience and ability to take punishment; ZA298 is no exception.

At the very beginning of its career, it was shot at by an Argentine Sky Hawk during the 1982 Falklands conflict. The 30mm cannon shells struck one of the Sea King’s rotor blades. Two hours later, repaired, it was off on another mission.

Just two days after that hairy encounter, the venerable war horse was used to ferry General Mario Menéndez, Argentine commander in the islands, to HMS Fearless where initial surrender negotiations were being held.

ZA298 also suffered damage from small arms fire when flying in Bosnia during the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

Such close shaves have earned the aircraft the tag ‘King of the Junglies’ – reference to the ‘Jungly’ nickname enjoyed by Sea Kings which support the Royal Marines on operations around the globe.

The helicopter is now serving once more with 846 Naval Air Squadron, one of two front-line Jungly squadrons based at Yeovilton as part of the Commando Helicopter Force.

Main image: Francis Stothard/  
Western Daily Press

# Tragic Olympus found

ITS barrel encrusted with seven decades of marine life, this is the deck gun of His Majesty’s Ship Olympus.

Otherwise the submarine, lost off Malta in May 1942, looks in remarkably good condition – save for the fact that she sits on the Mediterranean seabed.

After 70 years the Middle Sea has given up another of its ghosts thanks to the efforts of marine explorers.

Olympus fell victim to a mine dropped by the German Air Force as the Luftwaffe tried to pummel the island into submission in the spring and summer of 1942.

Her loss ranks among the very worst disasters in the history of the Silent Service – of the 98 (or possibly 100) souls aboard, only 11 survived.

Although divers believed they had found the wreck of the 283ft-long boat back in 2008, about three and half miles off the George Cross island, only now with the aid of deep-sea technology has Olympus been formally identified by the Aurora Trust Foundation which worked with officials in Malta to locate the sunken boat.

Explorer Craig Mullen says the submarine sits upright “almost as though it was still operational – and ready to resume its voyage”.

He and his colleagues used robot submarines to record images of Olympus – she lies at a depth beyond the reach of recreational divers – and which were used to confirm the wreck’s identity.

“The mine damage is clearly visible,” said Aurora’s director of marine archaeology Dr Timmy Gambin, who led the search for Olympus.

“Although covered in sea growth and home to numerous sea life, the wreck is in a surprisingly good condition – its distinctive features are clearly visible. The deck gun



● The unmistakable outline of a submarine... A side-scan sonar image of the wreck of Olympus  
Pictures: Aurora Trust Foundation

is slightly elevated and ready for action, and the bow and stern torpedo tubes are clearly identifiable.”

Olympus was built in the late 1920s for service in the Pacific and spent nearly a decade serving on the China Station. When the Italians declared war in 1940, she was dispatched west.

Although she was initially used on typical submarine patrols, by 1942 she was one of three boats which had been converted into underwater transporters – ferrying around 200 tons of supplies between Gibraltar and Malta on each run to help ease the Axis blockade of the island.

She set out on one such run on May 8 1942, carrying not just her normal complement of 55 crew, but more than 40 ‘passengers’ – crew from three sunken Royal Navy submarines, P36, P39 and Pandora – who were being sent back to the UK

to help crew new boats.

About an hour out of Grand Harbour, and still on the surface, Olympus was shaken by a terrible explosion. Although crew thought at first that she’d been bombed, the submarine had actually struck an aerial mine laid by German aircraft. On this occasion, no minesweeper had been sent to clear a path ahead.

The crew were soon ankle-deep in water, the electric lighting became intermittent, seawater got into Olympus’ batteries causing chlorine to spread through the boat.

Despite the chaos – it’s unlikely there was a formal order

to abandon ship – and the vast number of souls aboard, many men did get ‘top side’.

On the casing, officers urged men not to remove their submariner’s sweaters – they would provide good insulation in the water – but they did tell them to remove shoes and boots to help swimming.

“The men removed them – and lined them up neatly on the casing as they went into the water,” said George Malcolmson, archivist at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, who interviewed some of the Olympus survivors.

“They then set out as a group to swim towards Malta and, as daylight came, they watched the bombers come over and attack as they did every day at breakfast time.”

Some accounts say 11 men reached shore, others nine. It took the few survivors around five hours to get to land. Once eventually back in Britain, each one was personally interviewed by Max Horton, the WW1 submarine ace and leader of the struggle against the U-boats in WW2.

“In terms of numbers, the loss of Olympus ranks among the very worst of Royal Navy submarine disasters – right up there with the Thetis,” said Mr Malcolmson.

“The loss of the boat herself was of less concern than the loss of experienced submariners. Boats you can replace, but not the men.”

## Channel Dash remembered

ARGUABLY the bravest episode in 103 years of Royal Navy aviation will be commemorated with a series of 70th anniversary events, including historic flypasts.

The Channel Dash as it has become known – officially Operation Fuller on the British side, Operation Cerberus on the German – saw the battle-cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen race from Brest to the safety of German ports.

All six Fleet Air Arm Swordfish torpedo bombers of 825 Naval Air Squadron dispatched to attack the Germans off the Kent coast were shot out of the sky by flak and an almost-impenetrable Luftwaffe shield protecting the warships.

The squadron’s sacrifice – and other deeds that day – are recounted in our *supplement in the centre pages* and will be marked publicly with ceremonies this month and in May.

On Saturday February 11 there will be a memorial service in Ramsgate, where a monument was unveiled to the 825 NAS fliers in 2010.

Weather permitting, that service will be

accompanied by a flypast from a Swordfish of the Royal Navy Historic Flight based at Yeovilton.

In addition to proceedings on land and in the air, patrol boat HMS Trumpeter and a Thames pilot launch will head into the Channel to lay wreaths.

That evening a formal dinner will be held in the Officers’ Mess at RAF Manston, from where the six Swordfish took off in February 1942 – and where Esmonde had enjoyed a party to celebrate receiving the DSO for his role in the Bismarck sinking.

On Sunday February 12, events move to St Mary-in-Castro Church at Dover Castle for a service of remembrance for all three Services; in the tunnels below the castle, from where Admiral Bertram Ramsay directed the naval battle. Once again the Swordfish will conduct a flypast if the weather allows.

Finally, on Saturday May 19 the Operation Fuller Memorial Monument will be dedicated on Marine Parade in Dover.

As well as a significant presence from all three Services, the Historic Flight Swordfish is due to be joined in Kent skies by the RAF’s Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

## Air day off

CULDROSE’S annual air day won’t be taking place in 2012 due to resurfacing works at the air station.

That work on the taxiways which lead to the main runway will take from Easter until October – and means the Helston air station cannot accommodate the large numbers of visiting aircraft.

The resurfacing, coupled with the operational commitments of Culdrose’s Merlins and Sea Kings, needed not just around the globe but also in support of the Olympics security mission this year, has forced the air base’s commanders to take the reluctant decision to postpone the show until 2013.

Typically the July event attracts over 20,000 visitors... and the Cornish mist and rain.



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# Shining examples of courage

A NAVAL medic who saved the life of a wounded soldier under Taliban sniper fire, a helicopter crewman who rescued all 13 crewmen from a stricken tanker, every man in 42 Commando and the sailors of HMS Liverpool were among the military personnel honoured at *The Sun Military Awards*.

Billed as 'a night of heroes' at the Imperial War Museum in London the fourth annual awards – endorsed by the Ministry of Defence and better known as the Millies – saw soldiers, sailors and airmen rub shoulders with royalty, military and political leaders, including Prime Minister David Cameron, and celebrities such as footballer David Beckham, *Top Gear*'s Jeremy Clarkson, *Little Britain*'s David Williams and *Strictly Come Dancing* judge Alesha Dixon.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry were guests of honour with four of the ten awards being presented to members of the Naval Service (see the column on the far right for details).

It fell to Mr Cameron to hand the special award to half a dozen representative members of Liverpool's ship's company.

Their ship was, the premier said, "a shining example of the courage and professionalism that the Royal Navy are rightly famous for all over the world."

The destroyer's Officer of the Watch, Lt Ebony Dalton, enthused: "It feels absolutely fantastic and humbling at the same time."

"We just wish we could have the rest of the ship's company here with us."

TV presenter and musician Myleene Klass handed over the award for Most Outstanding Sailor to PO Mike Henson. Myleene, the daughter of a retired submariner, was in awe of the senior rates' life-saving actions.



● 'To everyone they are true heroes...' The men of 42 Commando, the military unit of the year, pose with the Duchess of Cambridge  
Picture courtesy of The Sun

"I'd love to have thought that my dad would have had someone like Mike Henson, had he needed him."

Judges of the Millies included TV hardman turned documentary maker Ross Kemp, England star Frank Lampard, ex-SAS man and author Andy McNab and the PM's wife Samantha Cameron.

Paying tribute to winners and nominees, the Chief of Defence Staff General Sir David Richards said:

"The British people recognise that the work that the Armed Forces do is extraordinary. I think I speak for all of us when I say that their selfless acts of courage and their professionalism in difficult and dangerous circumstances are actions that need to be celebrated and rewarded."

"For four years now, the Sun Military Awards have showcased these stories of bravery, of ingenuity, and of care. Long may they continue to shine a light on

these achievements and inspire others."

Awards presented to the other Services were: *overcoming adversity*: Pte Scott Meenagh, 2 Para; *most outstanding soldier*: Sgt Ryan McReady, 1st Battalion Royal Irish Regiment; *most outstanding airman*: Flt Lt Michael Anderson, RAF Odiham; *support to the Armed Forces*: Walking with the Wounded; *life saver award*: RAF Tactical Medical Wing; *true grit*: Pte Lee Stephens, 3rd Battalion The Mercian Regiment.

## And the winners are

■ **Best reservist: AEM Michelle 'Mich' Ping** – you can read her story on page 15.

■ **Most outstanding sailor or Royal Marine: PO Mike 'H' Henson** – an aircrewman with 829 Naval Air Squadron, H was lowered repeatedly on to the deck of the MV Pavit off the coast of Oman as waves crashed over the foundering tanker. The 29-year-old also had to contend with 35-knot winds as he lifted all 13 sailors from the tanker into the safety of HMS St Albans' Merlin helicopter... then lowered them on to another tanker ten miles away where medics treated them. Describing the rescue as "a bit hairy", the senior rate plays down his efforts that day. "Most airmen would do exactly the same thing – I was in the right place at the right time."

■ **Best unit: 42 Commando**, who received more than 200 nominations for their deeds – and sacrifices – during a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan. The Bickleigh-based green berets carried out more than five dozen helicopter assaults, dealt with nearly 250 home-made bomb incidents and suffered the highest casualty rate of any British force in Helmand over the summer: six men killed and more than 60 wounded. Despite such losses, throughout the men "took the fight to the enemy", cleared out "the last ulcer of Helmand", won over the hearts and minds of the populace and supported Afghan security forces such that efforts in the Nad-e Ali district now stand on "the very cusp of success". As the girlfriend of one of the men of 42 killed put it: "The Royal Marines of 42 Commando do not see themselves as heroes, but to everyone else they are true heroes. They put their lives on the line every single day to keep us safe. I salute every single one of them."

■ **Judges' award for special recognition: HMS Liverpool**, whose name is now inextricably bound with Libya. No British ship spent longer supporting the NATO mission to help the citizens of Libya and neutralise Col Gaddafi's military machine. The veteran destroyer was targeted by shore batteries – which thankfully missed, but the reverberations could be felt through the ship. "The ship has encountered things not seen since the Falklands War," reads one nomination. "HMS Liverpool has gone above and beyond what was expected of her when she left Portsmouth and the ship's company have shown true grit and determination."

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## Culdrose cinema is upgraded

MOVIE fans at Culdrose were treated to a special free viewing of a sci-fi thriller to mark the completion of a digital upgrade to the air station's on-site cinema.

SSVC (the Services Sound and Vision Corporation) Seahawk Cinema at Culdrose has undergone a £92,000 revamp with the latest digital technology to provide audiences with superior 2D picture quality and an immersive 3D experience.

The 11-month project is a joint venture with SSSC, the RNAS Culdrose Welfare Fund and the RNRMC.

The upgraded cinema showcased its new 3D capability by providing a free screening of *The Darkest Hour* courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox, one day before its official UK release, and Janice Lorimer, Head of SSSC Forces Cinemas, was there to hand out the special 3D glasses.

Janice said: "It's going to be an amazing community facility for Culdrose, and it's great that SSSC could help support this project."

Glyn Timmins, Financial Controller of the cinema and project overseer, said: "The new digitised facilities are great.

"We're hoping the 3D system will be a good draw for people to entice them out of their cabins."

The 192-seat cinema dates back to the 1970s, and has undergone a number of upgrades over the years to keep pace with technology.

There are programmes three nights a week – Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays – and it is also used as a briefing facility.

WO1 Steve Cass, Base Warrant Officer at RNAS Culdrose, said: "The cinema is a cracking facility, and the new 3D technology has dramatically enhanced it."

## RN Police in disaster exercise

FOUR members of the RN Police team from Portsmouth took part in a multi-agency disaster victim recovery exercise on board RFA tanker Bayleaf in the city's naval base.

The RNP quartet – Lt Oakey together with MAA Freeman, MAA Haynes and RPO Wright – hosted Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service's Urban Search and Rescue team in an exercise which took around eight months to plan.

## The very fast show

RAPID response and HMS Ocean, 48 hours' notice, an unscheduled appointment in the Med – does this all sound familiar?

It does to those tasked with creating two Combined Services Entertainment shows in just two days.

With the helicopter carrier heading home for Christmas after a seven-month deployment including a key role in the NATO mission in Libya, the powers-that-be decreed two live shows in Cyprus would be just the ticket.

Which left CSE with just 48 hours to plan the shows, find a venue, book dancers, band and comedians, buy costumes, book

# Anniversary marks start of expedition

MEMBERS of the British Services Antarctic Expedition 2012 have marked the 100th anniversary of the day Capt Robert Falcon Scott RN and his ill-fated team reached the South Pole.

The expedition is the first joint expedition mounted to the 'mainland' of the Antarctic Peninsula by UK Armed Forces, following three joint Service expeditions to the Antarctic islands of Elephant, Brabant and Smith, and three Army expeditions in 2001, 2004 and 2007.

In the best traditions of polar exploration, the current programme has had to adapt to extreme weather conditions.

Some members of the expedition were delayed when the 23m yacht *Australis*, heading south from Chile, suffered 'big seas' in the notorious Drake Passage followed by pack ice.

But with all 24 of the team – almost a third of them Royal Navy personnel – ashore, the main programme could be tackled.

One aim is to maintain the long tradition of the Armed Forces involvement in exploration and, in particular, polar science exploration – the ill-fated Scott is still lauded for his contribution to science and his efforts to further the bounds of human exploration and knowledge.

Research will be carried out on the Peninsula Arm of Antarctica, an area which is believed to be



● Members of Red Team cross a narrow glacier

warming faster than anywhere else on the planet.

Amongst other things, this science will contribute to an understanding of the factors influencing this rapid warming.

But unlike other expeditions seeking to follow in Scott's footsteps in 2012, the Services initiative is travelling in the spirit of Scott, but not in his tracks.

Scott's expedition began in 1910, but after a series of mishaps, by January 1912, only five of the team remained en route to the Pole – Scott, Wilson, Oates, Bowers and Evans.

On January 17 they reached their objective, only to find that a Norwegian party led by Roald Amundsen had beaten them to it.

They turned to begin the 1,500km journey back to safety, but by March – and almost within reach of salvation – all had died.

The current team, following Scott's model, have set up a base from which to mount exploration and conduct forays into remote areas of the Peninsula.

The expedition also plans to make a series of daring ascents of previously unclimbed mountains in the region.

Deputy expedition leader Lt Cdr Paul Hart reported in his blog on Sunday January 15 that Blue Team – one of the three teams of eight which follow different agendas – were preparing to move out of base camp for three or four weeks hauling science equipment to the far side of the peninsula:

The expedition also aims to raise money for Help for Heroes.

■ [www.bsae2012.co.uk](http://www.bsae2012.co.uk)



● The Royal Navy element of the expedition



● Flags fly above the expedition base camp



● Pictured with the model of HMS Montrose are Cllr Mark Salmond, Angus Provost Ruth Leslie Melville and the full-sized frigate's Commanding Officer Cdr Jonathan Lett.  
Picture: Andy Thompson Photography

## Montrose model given to affiliated town

A SCALE model of Plymouth-based frigate HMS Montrose has been presented to its affiliate town.

Commanding Officer Cdr Jonathan Lett and a small team from the ship visited Montrose to make the special presentation.

Having discovered the model of HMS Montrose was no longer needed for recruitment purposes, contact was made with the Montrose Museum, which accepted the offer of the gift and agreed to provide a new home for it as an exhibit.

The ship and her crew have strong connections with the town and the sailors frequently visit.

On a previous visit to the museum, Cdr Lett was struck by the town's strong maritime associations.

He said: "When the Director of Naval Recruiting asked if I had any use for the model of HMS Montrose, I realised where it had to go.

"Hopefully this will bring people into the museum to see the model and help keep the

link going."

Accepting the model on behalf of the museum, Angus Provost Ruth Leslie Melville said: "It is a tremendous treat to have this model.

"I am quite sure especially our younger children, who have such a strong bond with the ship and crew, are going to enjoy coming and seeing it.

"It will have pride of place here."

HMS Montrose is currently operating in the South Atlantic (see p19).

## Fund will help pupils settle in

THIRTEEN schools in the Helensburgh and Lomond area will benefit from a share of £147,000 that will help ease disruption to the education of Service children as they settle into new surroundings.

The cash will cement what is already a very strong link between Clyde Naval Base and the local education authorities.

The money is part of a £3 million allocation from the Support for State Schools Fund, helping almost 140 UK schools.

Started last year, the fund is expected to run until 2015.

The money will go to Argyll and Bute Council.

The scheme is one of the key commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant, the principles of which were enshrined in law last year, and it builds on the promises in education for the Armed Forces community.

Lynda Fisher, the MOD's Director for Children and Young People, said: "We know that moving from one school to another can be a challenging time for the children of serving personnel, and this £3 million fund has been set up to mitigate some of the effects of moving away from familiar surroundings.

"The money will allow schools to provide measures to ensure children of Service families do not suffer any disadvantage by moving to or through different school systems."

The Fund has helped all three Services, their respective Families Federations and the Help and Information Volunteer Exchanges (HIVES).

Capt Jack Tarr, Captain of the Base at Faslane, said: "This is good news for all the men and women who work and serve at the base.

"HM Naval Base Clyde is set to become not just the home of the Submarine Service, but the home of Submarine Service families – with submariners spending the majority of their careers here, it is natural that they should want the best for their families.

"We work hard with Argyll and Bute Council to ensure that our Service personnel are as much integrated into the community as they can be at all levels, but surely schooling is the most important.

"I know that we already have good schools in this part of the country, but this can only make them better."

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# Illustrious is back, ready for action

TRUE to the spirit in which she joined the Fleet nearly 30 years ago, HMS Illustrious completed the very final act of her long road out of refit: her rededication.

The ceremonial and symbolic act was performed at sea, just as the aircraft carrier's very first commissioning took place in 1982.

Back then Lusty was making best speed for the Falklands to relieve her sister HMS Invincible.

Three decades later, the helicopter assault ship was sailing at a more leisurely pace back from her first overseas visit in two years, Hamburg.

It being winter, the poignant ceremony took place in Illustrious' cavernous hangar.

The 700 men and women currently serving in the ship turned out smartly in their No.1 ceremonial

uniforms for this special occasion, with musical accompaniment to the hymns provided by the always-excellent HMS Illustrious volunteer band.

Present at the ceremony was the ship's senior physical training instructor, CPO Derik Nordon, who was aboard when Lusty was first commissioned at sea in June 1982.

"I feel privileged to have served in Illustrious three times, at the very beginning, during the middle, and now again as she nears the end of her famous career," he said.

"Each time it has been the people who I have served with that have made being on board such an enjoyable experience."

Rededication proceedings concluded with the cutting of the rededication cake, decorated with

Lusty's famous badge, a few 'interesting characters' drawn from the ship's company depicted in icing, and photos capturing various moments in the ship's life from the past six months.

As is traditional, the cutting was performed by the youngest person on board, 18-year-old Chef Lewis Steel, who sliced the cake in half; the two huge slices were shared between two lucky mess decks (determined by a raffle) to enjoy.

A rededication ceremony would normally take place ahead of a ship's Operational Sea Training period but events last year, which saw HMS Ocean deployed for seven months, resulted in HMS Illustrious' training programme being brought forward.

Lusty therefore conducting her ceremony after

successfully completing two months of intensive training and assessment off the South West coast ahead of taking over as Britain's on-call helicopter carrier from Ocean.

The rededication ceremony was also a fitting final act for the current Commanding Officer, Capt Jerry Kyd, who handed over command of the 22,000-tonne warship to Capt Martin Connell last month.

"It was a very busy and demanding year regenerating this fine ship from sailing from refit in Scotland in June to being ready for whatever the Government wants us to do around the world," said Capt Kyd.

"The ship's company have been brilliant as always and I'm tremendously proud of what they have achieved in the last year. Illustrious is back, ready for action."

Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, HMS Illustrious



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\*Terms and Conditions apply





# Heart of hoax are our ships

OCCASIONALLY in history a single weapon changes the face of war overnight.

The Gatling gun allowed small European armies to dominate much more numerous colonial foes.

Fat Man and Little Boy ushered in the atomic era.

And around mid-day on Saturday February 10 1906 the launch of HMS Dreadnought in Portsmouth Naval Base rendered every battleship afloat obsolete. Thus was born the dreadnought age – and the measure of a nation's worldwide standing was dictated by the number of all-big-gun battleships it built.

Britain, with the largest Navy in the world – and the most number of dreadnoughts – bristled with pride... but Nemesis has a habit of humiliating hubris.

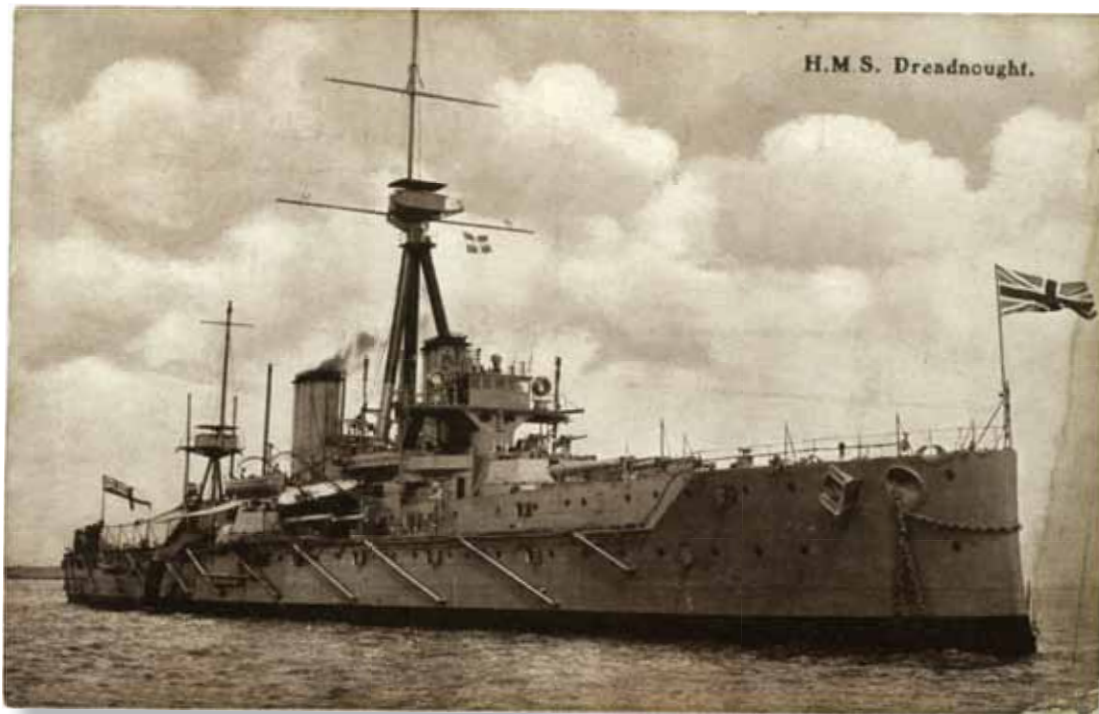
Almost precisely four years to the day of her launch, the progenitor had been superseded by a new generation of dreadnoughts – such was the dizzying progress made in naval armaments that 'super dreadnoughts' were already being built.

Despite more potent successors flying the White Ensign, Dreadnought herself remained the ultimate symbol of imperial might.

In February 1910 she flew the flag of Admiral Sir William May – 'Handsome Willie' – Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet off Portland.

May was presented with a telegram: the Emperor of Abyssinia – modern-day Ethiopia – his entourage, a Foreign Office minion and a translator were bound for Weymouth.

"Kindly make all arrangements to receive them," the telegram



ended. *Signed Hardinge* – Sir Charles Hardinge, Under Secretary of the Foreign Office.

May – a very formal character and strict disciplinarian – obliged.

At the station, the red carpet was unfurled and a guard of honour was arranged.

The Emperor and his retinue stepped off the train from Paddington to find a small crowd eagerly pressing against the makeshift barrier, while a Royal Navy officer in full ceremonial uniform greeted the Abyssinians.

A car carried the visitors to the harbour, where a waiting launch took them to Dreadnought, which was dressed overall for this famous occasion.

The ship raised the national

flag of Zanzibar in honour – no-one could find the Abyssinian ensign in time, nor the music for the national anthem; the Royal Marines band struck up Zanzibar's instead.

The African visitors did not mind. Far from it. They were delighted by the hospitality, and in particular by Dreadnought's modern fittings, notably her electric light bulbs and her main armament.

"Bunga bunga," the guests nodded with approval, while their translator struggled to convert naval terms into Abyssinian.

Dreadnought's senior officers were presented with 'Abyssinian medals' in recognition of their hospitality, while the party handed

out small cards printed in Swahili to the bemused ship's company.

For 40 minutes, the distinguished guests enjoyed their tour of the pride of the Fleet before returning to London, where they posed for a group photograph to celebrate a great day.

Except that the Abyssinians weren't really Abyssinians.

They were blackened-up Brits, led by arch practical joker Horace de Vere Cole (he'd previously pretended to be the Sultan of Zanzibar and later may have been behind the Piltdown Man hoax), and including the future Virginia Woolf, who donned a fake beard and turban as disguises.

As for the Abyssinian spoken... it was little more than

bastardised Latin and Greek mispronounced.

The British public was amused; Admiral May – and not a few Dreadnought sailors – were greeted with cries of 'Bunga bunga', a catchphrase apparently adopted by many Edwardian Britons to express delight, surprise or satisfaction.

Newspapers delighted in the 'Bunga Bungle', cartoonists suggested officers might try to inspect turbans or tug at beards to verify the credentials of foreign visitors in future, and a song quickly did the rounds in music halls:

**When I went on board a dreadnought ship I looked like a costermonger; They said I was an Abyssinian prince 'cos I shouted 'Bunga Bunga!'**

They don't write them like that any more...

Anyway, the Admiralty reacted in a suitably po-faced manner. The corridors of power spent the next month or so trying to find some charge to lay against Cole; it even dispatched two officers to his home to cane him. 'Handsome Willie' demanded some of the other hoaxers apologise in person – one tried, was kept waiting for 20 minutes, then sent away saying the admiral had no intention of receiving him.

Jack, however, saw the funny side. When HMS Dreadnought rammed and sank German submarine U29 in 1915 – the only truly dramatic episode in a rather anti-climactic career – various notes of appreciation were sent to the ship from across the Navy. One read simply: B U N G A B U N G A.

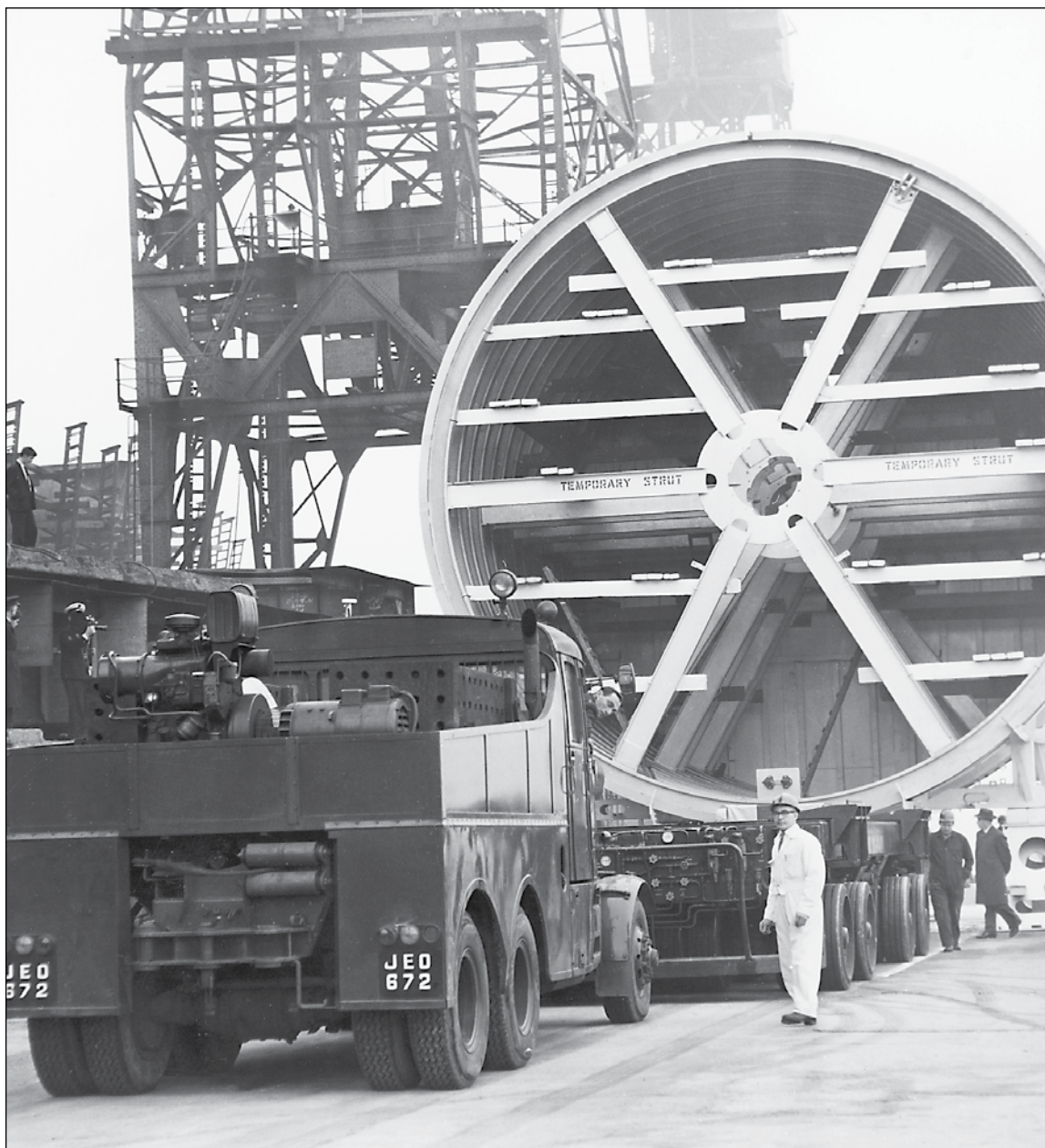


Armada.....	1588
Cadiz.....	1596
Lowestoft.....	1665
Four Days' Battle.....	1666
Orfordness.....	1666
Sole Bay.....	1672
Schooneveld.....	1673
Texel.....	1673
Barfleur.....	1692
Passero.....	1718
Cape Francois.....	1757
Trafalgar.....	1805

Class: Dreadnought-class battleship  
Motto: Fear God and dread nought  
Builder: HM Royal Dockyard, Portsmouth  
Laid down: October 2, 1905  
Launched: February 10, 1906  
Commissioned: December 11, 1906  
Decommissioned: February 1919  
Broken up: January 1923  
Displacement: 18,120 tons  
Length: 527ft  
Beam: 82ft  
Draught: 26ft  
Complement: 700  
Speed: 21kts  
Range: 6,600 miles at 10kts  
Engines: 18 x Babcock and Wilcox boilers powering four-screw Parsons direct-drive turbines  
Armour: belt 4-11in; deck 3-4in; barbettes 4-11in; turrets 3-12in; conning tower 11in; bulkheads 8in  
Armament: 10 x 12in guns mounted in five twin-turrets; 28 x 28pdrs, 1 x 12pdr field gun; 5 x machine-guns; 5 x 18in torpedo tubes  
Cost: £1,672,483 (roughly £750m today)



## PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES



IN HER day HMS Dreadnought was the ultimate weapon, the symbol of a great power.

Half a century later and the new standard of military might was the nuclear bomb, a definition of a nation's standing in the world as much as any castle of steel had been.

Our monthly dip into the vast photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum takes us back to February 26 1964.

Fifty-eight years after Dreadnought was launched, this 100-ton circular segment was ceremoniously wheeled out at the Vickers-Armstrong yard in Barrow to signal the birth of the Polaris age.

This is the start of HMS Resolution, the first of four 'R' boats which would take over from the RAF's 'V' bombers as the delivery system of choice for the ultimate weapon.

The Senior Service had already gone down the nuclear submarine route – the experimental HMS Dreadnought was in service, the first hunter-killer Valiant had been launched and her sister Warspite just laid down.

As for carrying the nation's strategic deterrent, however, that was something if not unthinkable just four years earlier, then certainly unlikely.

As the 1960s began – and with Cold War arguably at its coldest – Britain's nuclear arsenal was shared between the RAF and Navy (tactical weapons such as Red Beard) while the RAF's Valiant, Victors and Vulcans, the fabled V-bomber force, carried the strategic deterrent.

The V-bombers, the Vulcan especially, looked imposing – they were always crowdpleasers at air shows.

But they were also lumbering targets and in the missile age, Whitehall was all too aware of the vulnerability of the RAF bombers – which would be the first wave of any action against the USSR; Bomber Command was expected to strike at targets in western Russia long before the much larger American Strategic Air Command could intervene.

What could carry Britain's nuclear deterrent, then? Hopes had been placed in the Blue Streak programme – an intercontinental ballistic missile, operated by the RAF – but it was cancelled in 1960 as costs spiralled (estimated at £600m – over £10bn today).

The fall-back was Skybolt, a large air-launched ballistic missile, currently being developed by the Americans. Two Skybolts, strapped beneath a Vulcan, could be fired

in mid-air. They would race to their intended targets more than 1,000 miles away at 12 times the speed of sound.

Within months of Britain agreeing to put all its eggs in the Skybolt basket, there were disquieting reports that all was not well with the project: costs were rising and the missile was not living up to expectations.

All of which was being calmly monitored by the Admiralty. It had kept one eye on the Americans' new ballistic missile submarines and their Polaris missile system just entering service.

If Britain were to go down the Polaris route, it would be more expensive in the short term (an initial outlay of perhaps £350m), but much cheaper in the long run: the Navy could support a submarine deterrent force with 2,500 men; the RAF reckoned it needed 10,000 personnel to support its V-bombers.

As it was, the Americans pulled the plug on Skybolt shortly after the Cuban missile crisis, prompting a transatlantic diplomatic row, not a few uncomfortable debates for the Government in the Commons, and, just before Christmas 1962, a summit in the Bahamas involving Kennedy and Macmillan.

The resulting Nassau Agreement led to the sale of Polaris missiles to the UK; they would be equipped with British-made nuclear warheads and carried by British-built nuclear submarines...

...which brings us to February 1964 and the laying down of Resolution, the first of four ballistic missile boats (Repulse, Renown and Revenge; a fifth projected submarine, Ramillies, was cancelled).

With hindsight, what's remarkable about Polaris is the speed with which the whole programme was carried out; from Nassau to Resolution's first patrol in June 1968 just five and a half years elapsed.

Polaris was hailed by many as "a bargain". Depending on reports, it was delivered either on time/on budget, or on time and only five per cent over the initial cost. Moreover, it proved to be four times cheaper than the RAF's V-bombers.

By the end of 1969, all four R-boats were in service. They would never miss a minute's vigil until the last, HMS Repulse, completed the final deterrent patrol in 1996.

■ THIS photograph (HU 110185) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at [www.iwmcollections.org.uk](http://www.iwmcollections.org.uk), by emailing [photos@iwm.org.uk](mailto:photos@iwm.org.uk), or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



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Defence Health Promotion

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SMOKERS in the Royal Navy are being encouraged to take the leap in order to kick their habit.

Data collected on the most recent tri-Service lifestyle survey showed that just under one in four sailors are smokers – and smokers are almost three times more likely to be medically downgraded than non-smokers.

Further data based on Naval Service personnel attending the dentist suggests around 23 per cent of Royal Navy and 20 per cent of Royal Marines personnel are current smokers.

This year's National (and Military) No Smoking Day – the initiative merged with the British Heart Foundation last year – is on Wednesday March 14, and all RN and RM units are “strongly encouraged to organise their own NSD/MNSD campaign, to persuade smokers to ‘Kick the Habit’.”

Events should be organised through Unit Health Committees (UHCs), drawing on the expertise of the Medical Department and Unit Smoking Cessation Advisors.

The theme is ‘Take the Leap’ backed by images of people leapfrogging over a cigarette (see left).

Smokers will be encouraged to take the leap on February 29 – leap year day – to prepare themselves to give up the habit on No Smoking Day itself, two weeks later.

Vishnee Sauntoo, MNSD



● The Principal Medical Officer at RN Air Station Culdrose, Surg Cdr Darryl Wylie (left) leads the assault on the dreaded Big Cig during No Smoking Day 2011 at the Cornish air base. Joining the officer in his campaign against smoking were Lt Jane Davis and Leading Dental Hygienist Jonathan McIlwraith. Big Cig is once again in the firing line on March 14 this year

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow

campaign manager, said: “In previous years we’ve been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the military to raise awareness of the health benefits of quitting smoking, as well as directing people to professional help and support that is now provided at most military establishments both in the UK and overseas.

“It’s the perfect day to talk about the benefits of quitting in a fun and engaging way.”

Annie Owen, Armed Forces smoking cessation co-ordinator, said: “Military personnel care about their health and the need to maintain a high standard of fitness in order to fulfil their role.

“It is a known fact that smoking affects both health and stamina.

“Two thirds of military personnel say they would like to stop smoking and by using Military No Smoking Day, many have successfully done so.”

More information can be found at [www.nosmokingday.org.uk/military/](http://www.nosmokingday.org.uk/military/)

All Naval Service units should have received special starter packs containing material to kick-start a local campaign – larger units will have two packs, one for the Medical Centre and the other for the UHC via the PT Department.

Three Big Cig costumes are available on loan – units who wish to bid for a Big Cig should forward details of their campaign, using the proforma at Annex A of the NSD campaign newsletter, to CPO(PT) Newcombe by Wednesday February 29.

The three most innovative applications that best portray the Big Cig on NSD will be allocated the costumes, which must be collected and returned by the respective establishments or ships.

Smoking Cessation Services are now widely available in all RN and

RM establishments, where one-to-one counselling and/or group discussions can take place.

Personnel should contact their Medical Departments or Smoking Cessation Advisors for further information.

In ships and submarines where no Medical Officer or Smoking Cessation Advisor is available assistance can be obtained from the Base Port Medical Centres at HMS Drake, Nelson and Neptune.

For further information on NSD/MNSD 12 and Smoking Cessation Advisors courses, contact CPO(PT) Newcombe on 9380 27743 (mil) or 023 9272 7743.

Although national and military No Smoking Day is the focus of media attention, the campaign continues throughout the year with help and support for quitters and potential quitters through the dedicated website at [www.WeQuit.co.uk](http://www.WeQuit.co.uk)



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● A pupil from Woodlawn School at Monkseaton salutes the work of sailors from HMS Calliope

# Calliope tackles school ground

A NORTH Tyneside school playground is now in pristine condition after a team of volunteers from the Royal Naval Reserve gave up their weekend, equipped themselves with paint brushes, gardening tools and overalls and totally transformed the appearance of the playground.

The play area at Woodlawn School in Monkseaton had seen better days, and did little to inspire or encourage the school's pupils to look after it.

This prompted the school's Communications Coordinator, Michelle Harding – who is also an able seaman at the Tyne's RNR unit, HMS Calliope – to press-gang her shipmates into helping with the transformation.

More than ten of her colleagues eagerly accepted the challenge and set to work organising and planning the layout of the new play area.

Together with the help of local shops and businesses, who donated flowers, plants and materials to aid the project, the result was a play area that the students could be proud of.

The Head Teacher Designate of Woodlawn, an all-age school for pupils with a broad range of severe or complex special educational needs, is Simon Ripley.

Simon said he was delighted with the hard work and



● From left at rear, CPO Dave Limbrick, S/Lt Jim Farquhar and AB1 Kevin 'Frankie' Howard; in front of them is AB Michelle Harding with a pupil from Woodlawn School

commitment that the RNR team had put into helping the school.

"We now have an area that the children can be justly proud of," he said.

"There are parts of the playground that were previously overrun with weeds that our students can take responsibility for and look after as part of their on-going education.

"We are thrilled with the way the RNR took on this project."

Tyne RNR's Commanding Officer, Cdr Andy Collier, was full of praise for his team.

"Today's Royal Navy is all about teamwork, and what better way to demonstrate this than our group of reservists from all ranks giving up their weekend freely and helping the community?" said Cdr Collier.

"I am very proud of their initiative, team work and community spirit."



● Lt Cdr Chris Parry RNR

## Anti-piracy effort is rewarded

RNR officer Chris Parry has been awarded the MBE for his part in the UK anti-piracy mission off Somalia.

Lt Cdr Parry, who joined the Naval Reserves in 1994, started working for the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) in 2006 and is currently the Staff Officer AWNIS (Allied Worldwide Navigation Information System).

He heads a team based in Taunton which works closely with the RNR to deliver safety and security information to merchant ships and warships involved in or transiting through operational areas.

Chris, a member of HMS Flying Fox in Bristol, said: "It has been a real challenge to make sure that all elements of the maritime infrastructure are joined up."

"This means that ships get navigation warnings alerting them to pirate activity and that the charts and publications that they use provide consistent advice on what routes to take, who to report to, self protective measures and what to do when attacked."

This work has involved many firsts for Chris and the team – not least the creation of a new type of chart specifically for the piracy problem off Somalia, and engaging with many overseas organisations to make sure merchant ships stay safe.

Chris said: "This is a great honour, especially as what we do is only a small part of the work which goes into the international anti-piracy effort."

The aim of AWNIS is to collate, coordinate and communicate navigational safety and security information to merchant shipping and military authorities within an operational area.

Wherever the military interacts with the maritime environment there is a requirement for AWNIS.

Currently members of the RNR AWNIS specialisation are mobilised as part of the UK Maritime Trade Organisation in Dubai, EU Naval Force HQ at Northwood, UK naval operations across the globe and, until recently, supporting operations off Libya from Naples.

Chris was mobilised to Iraq in 2003 as part of the campaign against Saddam Hussain and over the past three years, together with his AWNIS team, has been deployed to support operations off Libya and Somalia.

The latter has involved working closely with the EU, NATO and UK forces off Somalia to deliver safety advice to merchant ships which are transiting through the piracy high-risk area.

UKHO Chief Executive Ian Moncrieff said: "This is a well-deserved and fitting public recognition of his excellent work and that of the AWNIS team on anti-piracy support to all mariners and their contribution to operations off the North African littoral."



● AB Philip Cooper from HMS King Alfred narrowly avoids getting wet on the bosun's chair

## Challenge for teams – and organisers

PLANNERS are already looking ahead to September and the next staging of the successful Crowborough Challenge series.

The challenge, HMS President's annual flagship command, leadership and management training event, sees over 200 personnel from Royal Naval Reserve units across the country gather in the East Sussex countryside to tackle a series of physical and mental tasks.

Also in the mix in 2011 were the URNUs from London, Sussex and Bristol.

The Deputy Commander UK Maritime Reserve Forces, Capt Gareth Derrick, attended as the principal VIP.

The format has changed little over the years. Divided into teams, participants complete a dozen tasks on the Saturday that test management, communication and physical skills.

These include raft-building and crossing a stretch of water by bosun's chair – virtually guaranteeing a good soaking if their construction skills are not all that they could be.

Within the teams there is no

rank, allowing each person's true potential to show through.

Sunday brings the opportunity to take the Royal Navy Fitness Test as well as play team sports such as touch rugby and volleyball, or take on the assault course.

The Challenge wouldn't be the success it is without the dedication of its organisers.

The weekend takes up a good deal of HMS President's manpower to organise and run – some 40 people were involved in creating, setting up and running the 2011 event.

Lt Alec Harper, one of the principal organisers, said: "I was continually impressed by the energy and enthusiasm from all involved."

"The weekend was a great success, with individuals taking away valuable lessons that can be applied in their RNR careers."

Cdr Eugene Morgan, President's CO, said: "Once again the team from HMS President has created a valuable and thoroughly enjoyable Crowborough Challenge weekend that is relevant to both the Royal Navy and to the individuals involved."

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● Colours at the HMS Sherwood training weekend

## Training and ceremonies at Sherwood

OFFICERS and ratings from HMS Sherwood managed to squeeze training and high-profile ceremonial duties into one busy weekend late last year.

The city of Nottingham's service of remembrance was the focus of a training weekend for a combined company of 40 men and women from Sherwood and the Nottingham Detachment of the Royal Marine Reserves, who took a prominent part in the parade and act of remembrance.

The reservists joined hundreds of serving and former members of the Forces, regular and reserves, and their families and friends at the Memorial Gardens on Nottingham's Victoria Embankment.

The CO of Sherwood, Cdr Martin Clegg RNR, and the Officer Commanding the RMR Detachment, Capt Al Edgar RMR, came together with local civic dignitaries to lay wreaths at the city's war memorial.

For one reservist the highlight of the weekend was a day earlier, when CPO Samantha Martin had the privilege of leading the RNR platoon at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.

Meanwhile other members of the ship's company participated in a busy training programme, including sport and fitness, general naval knowledge, security and radiation safety.

Divisional officers were busy writing annual reports and preparing for divisional meetings and RN staff instructors conducted parade training and uniform checks in preparation for the remembrance ceremonies.

"It was a really busy weekend, and I was exhausted by the end, but I learnt a lot," said AB Olivia Rust.

## Pride of HMS Scotia

A LONG-serving clubs has been rewarded with a Queen's Volunteer Reserves Medal in the New Year's Honours list.

CPO David Gibson joined the Royal Navy in September 1972 as a Seaman Specialist, switching to the Physical Training Instructor branch four years later.

In 1996 he left the regular service for a career in the transport industry, but volunteered for the RNR, and is currently HMS Scotia's lead New Entry Instructor and PTI.

The award reflects the positive influence David has had over many years, not just within Scotia but in the wider communities of Rosyth and Dunfermline – while under his watch, Scotia trainees have bagged 17 prizes while going through HMS Raleigh, the RN's initial training establishment.



● Mich Ping with Craig Patterson at Headley Court in Surrey

Picture: Lt Cdr Heather Lane RNR

# Saving life in a deadly firefight

### "MAN down! Medic!"

Under a fiercely burning sun and on the dusty rooftop of an Afghan compound, a young Highlander sharpshooter had been shot, writes Lt Cdr Heather Lane RNR.

One piercing bullet passed through his skull as he raised his head over the low wall to take a quick ranging sight – Taliban snipers caught him in their crosshairs as they ambushed his patrol team from the 4 Scots Royal Regiment.

Without one thought for her own safety, climbing up to the exposed roof to reach her casualty as the bullets ricocheted around her, the patrol's paramedic Michelle Ping knew she must keep him alive until the emergency rescue helicopter arrived.

As the young soldier fell unconscious, bleeding profusely from a severe head wound, she considered the problem of getting him down from the roof to get them both quickly and safely under cover.

Using all the strength she could muster, she rolled the young injured soldier to the edge of the wall and coordinated a controlled drop of the unconscious man down into the strong arms of several of his fellow soldiers.

Back down on the ground, having stabilised the wound and with the Taliban firefight carrying on around them, a race for life began, bearing the casualty across 500m of boggy drainage ditches and through the uneven scrub to reach the helicopter landing site.

Saving lives is what Sheffield-based Mich Ping does in her civilian job as a paramedic with Yorkshire Ambulance's Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) – a job that requires courage, fitness and first response medical expertise.

And although Mich actually deployed to Afghanistan in her role as an air engineer, her parallel life in the RNR has taken those qualities to the most extreme environment, where her skill, bravery and fortitude brought immense value to the UK military operation.

Sitting quietly in the recovery ward in the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre Headley Court, 21-year-old Craig Patterson explained that what Mich did that day is the reason he is still alive to tell his story.

Paying tribute to his rescuer, Craig said: "Mich deserves a medal for her immediate and immensely brave actions on



● Mich Ping meets Prince Harry at the Millies – The Sun Military Awards – held at the Imperial War Museum in London

Picture courtesy The Sun

that day, and in fact for every day that she patrolled alongside us, weighed down by the huge backpack of medical supplies plus all her own kit, keeping our spirits up, mothering us all.

"Her continued compassion plus the warm friendship and care she has shown to me since then is helping me to recover."

Since returning from her operational tour, Mich has been a regular visitor to Headley Court, near Leatherhead in Surrey, to visit Craig and other injured soldiers she knew from her time in Afghanistan.

The shared experiences and bonds created will last a lifetime, as she explained.

"These were my boys – we shared the trials and the extreme challenges of real warfare in some pretty rough areas near our remote patrol bases, working alongside the Afghan Army and Police to improve the security conditions," said Mich, aged 37.

"My boys kept me going with their banter, their humour and courage, and I was happily accepted into their world where I am just so grateful I was able to contribute for the good of the team."

"It was a fundamentally life-changing experience."

"I will miss their camaraderie so much but I was hugely proud to have been invited back to march alongside the Regiment at their parade in Scotland in December, as reported in last month's edition.

"A female Navy Reserve in amongst all those brave Highlanders – how proud I was!"

Her selfless actions on that day in Afghanistan were recalled at a glittering star-studded reception in London before Christmas, when Mich was announced as the recipient of the Best Reservist trophy at the Millies – The Sun Military Awards, endorsed by the MOD (see p9).

Mich was presented with her trophy by celebrity chef Gordon Ramsey, and then joined on stage by Craig, his mother Alison and girlfriend Louise Dalgarno – Craig declaring "Michelle saved my life – definitely."

The London event was an "amazing night," said Mich, adding: "At one point Prince Harry put his arm around me and I was thinking 'I'm just Mich Ping from Sheffield'."

"The Prince is really down-to-earth – he is just one of the boys."

Back home in Yeovilton, Reserve colleagues listened with respect as Mich described her deployed experiences in Afghanistan to members of the Fleet Air Arm Branch of the RNR.

Mich originally qualified as an Air Engineering Mechanic in the Royal Navy but after several years supporting the RN's helicopter fleet based in Yeovilton, she decided on a career change to become a paramedic, training in the civilian world with the Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

Not wanting to leave the friends she left behind in the Navy, she joined the Reserves Air Branch, which allowed her to continue to work for part of the year at weekends, on training exercises and on call for operations – her new employers have been extremely supportive seeing the positive benefits of such challenging training in extremely hazardous environments.

And despite her presence as an air engineer, her alternative civvy skills have put her in great demand on deployment.

Her CO, Head of the Reserves Air Branch Cdr Steve Cheyne said: "AEM Ping has enormous reserves of personal strength, true grit and emotional resilience – she is an incredible woman who can flex her talents, adapting readily across a wide range of capabilities."

"I am delighted to hear of her latest successful operational experience."

"She has not only deployed to Afghanistan but has in previous years voluntarily deployed to Basra in Iraq, again outside her specific branch role, to support Information Operations."

"She sets a very fine example to her colleagues, demonstrating that Maritime Reserves can deliver across a spectrum of capability both at sea, in the air world and on the ground."

Michael Hardaker, manager of Yorkshire Ambulance Service's Hazardous Area Response Team, said: "We are all very proud of Michelle and the incredibly brave role she undertook in Afghanistan."

"We are delighted that she has been recognised for the selfless actions she carried out to save the life of a colleague."

"Michelle is a very focused person as well as being a highly-skilled paramedic, and the actions which led to her receiving this award come as little surprise to everyone who works alongside her."

Mich's civilian job sees her work as part of a specialist paramedic team which is trained and equipped to deliver clinical care in challenging environments such as medical emergencies which require working in confined spaces or at height.

That could include collapsed buildings, unstable structures and heavy transportation accidents, as well as situations where casualties are present in locations with difficult access, such as the cab of a construction crane or in a dark tunnel.



● Mne Dan Holder with his Bronze Star

## American honour for Dan

A ROYAL Marines Reservist who narrowly escaped death while helping to rescue colleagues in the face of Taliban attacks has been awarded a much-coveted medal by the Americans.

Mne Dan Holder was presented with the Bronze Star (Valour) for two incidents in Afghanistan during Operation Herrick 12 in 2010, while serving with Charlie Coy 40 Commando Royal Marines.

In the first, in Sangin district, Dan was point man with a patrol from 7 Troop which attempted to recover five casualties from an IED (improvised explosive device) blast – the point man takes the lead and identifies potential threats to his colleagues.

Where there is a risk of IEDs the man at the front is the 'Vallon man', operating a metal detector to locate and identify bombs before they can be detonated or set off by tripwires.

Dan knew one of his mates was involved in the incident, and having identified two further IEDs en route to the casualties his patrol made contact with the enemy and were involved in a lengthy firefight.

They succeeded in recovering the five men, but two – one an American – died.

The British victim of the bomb was Mne Jonny Crookes, a fellow Reservist from the same troop as Dan and an immensely-popular Bootneck who was, like Dan, a tree surgeon in civilian life.

In the second incident Dan was using his civilian skills to cut back trees when, from his lofty perch, he spotted what he believed to be tripwires in the adjacent river.

He reported the sighting, and was asked if he wanted to go out with the American patrol the following day to clear the area – "stupidly I said yes," said Dan.

"I showed him where they were, and he defused one device, but I thought I could see more wires."

As the American felt around for further devices, covered by Dan and the rest of the patrol, an IED detonated and instantly killed the American; in taking most of the blast he unwittingly protected Dan from serious injury.

It was then up to Dan again to clear a route back to safety at the patrol base.

Dan, who is part of the Portsmouth Detachment of RMR London, travelled to the Commando Training Centre RM at Lympstone to pick up his Bronze Star from Lt Gen Dennis Hejlik USMC, the representative of the Commandant General of the USMC, on behalf of the President and Naval Secretary.

Also there was Lt Col Stephen Crouden, until recently the CO of RMR London, who said how privileged and humble he felt to be present at the event, which formed part of the supersession ceremony of the Royal Marines Commandant General, with Maj Gen Ed Davis taking over the reins of the Corps from the outgoing Maj Gen Buster Howes.





● **Capt William Entwisle carries out checks on his respirator during anti-chemical warfare training at Culdrose**

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Sterrett

# Take a deep breath...

THE Commanding Officer of RN Air Station Culdrose, Capt William Entwisle, and his officers are required to carry out regular training in the use of respirators and protective clothing to ensure that they can continue to function in hostile environments.

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards may have to be confronted during operations, and all military personnel receive training to protect themselves and those around them in the event of an attack.

Regular training consists of classroom work in preparation for exposure to irritant substances in a special Confirmation Testing Facility (CTF), where everyone has to remove their respirator, replace one of the filter canisters and carry out decontamination actions while holding their breath and keeping their eyes shut, before replacing their respirator.

Open eyes or a quick breath will result in several minutes of tingling discomfort.

CBRN Instructor PO William Harley said: "CBRN training is essential for all naval personnel, and throughout the command chain, with no exceptions."

"It presents an opportunity to have a complete change from their normal working day."

# Navy voters urged to beat the deadline

THOUSANDS of Royal Navy personnel could lose their chance to vote this year if they do not fill in a registration form.

Each year members of the Royal Navy across the UK, and on deployment at sea, cannot have their say in elections because they do not register to vote by the deadline.

Now personnel are being encouraged to go along to a unit registration day – to be held at bases throughout this month – or download and fill in a registration form at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces)

Local government elections will take place in many parts of England, Wales and Scotland on Thursday May 3, and there will also be elections for the Greater London Assembly and Mayor of London on the same day.

Samantha Mills, Head of Campaigns at the Electoral Commission, said: "The elections are not far away so it's important that people register to vote as soon as possible to avoid losing their say."

"It's quick and easy to register, and by doing so you can secure your vote for the upcoming elections and make sure you have your say on the issues that matter to you."

"The Navy is made up of a very mobile population; moving house, moving base and being deployed at sea are all factors that result in lower registration rates amongst members of the Royal Navy."

"We want to encourage all Navy personnel to register before the deadline on April 18 or, if you think you are already registered, to double-check that you are on the electoral roll."

Three-quarters per cent of Service personnel who responded to a Ministry of Defence survey last year said they were on the electoral register, yet recent research by the Electoral Commission shows that 44 per cent of those not registered incorrectly believed that they were.



Navy personnel who know they will be abroad on Thursday May 3, or can't make it to a polling station in person for another reason, can apply to vote by post or by choosing a proxy – a person they trust to cast their vote on their behalf.

The Electoral Commission is an independent body set up by the UK Parliament with the aim of building and maintaining integrity and public confidence in the UK's democratic process.

The Commission regulates party and election finance and sets standards for well-run elections.

Service personnel have two options for registering to vote.

Those based in Great Britain can either register in the same way as civilians, by filling in and

returning the annual canvass form sent out by their local electoral registration office.

Alternatively, Service personnel, including those based abroad but eligible to vote in the UK, can register using a special form for Service personnel only.

This means they are registered for a five-year period, rather than a single year as they would be if they filled in the conventional annual canvass form.

The service voter form can be found at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces)

Even if Service personnel have registered using the Service voter registration form, they must update their details, such as address or name of proxy, if these change.

If Service personnel are going to be based abroad, or at another location in the UK, there are two methods of voting – by post or by proxy.

If personnel wish to vote by post they must remember that, depending on where they're based, there may not be enough time to return the ballot before voting closes – 10pm on election day.

Appointing a proxy in the UK allows a trusted person to vote on the Navy member's behalf.

More information on appointing a proxy or voting by post, including all necessary forms, can be found at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces)

Applications for a proxy vote need to be in by Wednesday April 25.

# Afghanistan troupes tour front-line bases

THE CSE Forces Entertainment team have been back in Afghanistan delivering 14 shows to entertain and boost the morale of British troops.

A tour featuring comedians Rich Wilson and Steve Harris, music duo Front Cover, and three CSE (Combined Services Entertainment) dancers performed five shows in nine days to troops based in Kandahar, Kabul – Camp Souter, Kabul International Airport, Camp Bastion and Camp Leatherneck.

Meanwhile, another CSE team were doing their bit at the sharp end of operations, delivering a much-appreciated morale boost to forward operating bases and patrol bases in Helmand Province.

Comedians Barry Castagnola and Andy Askins, CSE dancers Charlotte Chapman and Natasha Lusted and tour manager Ian Nicholls performed shows at FOBs Shawquat, Attal, Price, Oulette and PB Rahim.

Troops returned from patrol and saw a stripped-back CSE show but with all the right elements to keep the boys and girls happy.

Barry said: "Telling jokes to troops who've literally just come in from a fire fight and still have camouflage cream on is about as full-on as any gigs get."

"But they are so appreciative, and the experiences I've had will stay with me forever. It's a privilege."

The performers were given a warm welcome in every location



● **CSE dancers Sarah Miller, Casey Hill and Claudia Evans at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan**

and delivered shows to around 4,000 troops during their tour.

Entertainment Manager Angie Avianos said: "It's great to deliver a little bit of morale and help people to forget where they are for a few hours and let off some steam."

"We were overwhelmed with the response we had – we can't wait to go back and do it again."

Feedback has been effusive, with a lot of comments on the CSE Facebook page, including:

■ "Fantastic show in BSN tonight. Great comedy, brilliant music and stunning dancers. Cheers guys."

■ "Just wanted to say that I absolutely loved your show tonight. Thank you for all you

do, I can't express how much that helped cheer us up."

CSE is dedicated to entertaining and boosting the morale of UK Forces around the world, and delivers some 400 show days a year.

As the official provider of live entertainment to the Armed Forces, CSE routinely sends tours to Afghanistan, Cyprus, the Middle East and to Royal Navy ships deployed worldwide.

CSE is part of the Services charity SSVVC (Services Sound and Vision Corporation), which includes the BFBS (British Forces Broadcasting Service), SSVVC Cinemas and the British Defence Film Library.

# Boos for the boys

BFBS – the British Forces Broadcasting Service – has teamed up with *The Sun* and Audioboo to help families keep in touch.

Boost for the Boys is a scheme whereby people can record and upload messages for family and friends in the Forces.

The service is free and simple to use, and a BFBS smartphone app can be downloaded free from the iTunes store or Android Market.

Short recorded messages – or 'boos' – are played on BFBS Radio to Forces listeners around the world, and can be heard in the UK on a digital service.

The messages are also uploaded onto the Boost for the Boys

webpage on Audioboo (<http://audioboo.fm/channel/boost-for-the-boys>), meaning you can listen again to your message if you miss it on BFBS.

Ernie Rowe, Head of BFBS Radio UK, said: "Our service keeps the Forces connected every day but there's no substitute for hearing the voices of your loved ones when you're thousands of miles apart."

"You can't overestimate the positive effect on morale that these Boost for the Boys messages will have, and we are delighted to be teaming up with *The Sun* and Audioboo to give a lift to our dedicated servicemen and women."

# Gay Archer back in business

THE last survivor of a class of 1950s fast patrol boats has completed sea trials and is ready to take paying passengers for high-speed jollies in the Bristol Channel.

HMS Gay Archer was the first of the 12-strong Gay class to be launched, entering the water at the Vosper boatyard in August 1952.

The 65-ton petrol-powered warships could reach speeds of nearly 50mph, had a crew of 13, and could function as either motor torpedo boats (MTBs) or motor gun boats (MGBs).

Now in private hands, Gay Archer has had a new starboard engine fitted and is available to hire, for private parties, corporate events, film and TV work, photo-shoots – or just to take guests on fuel-injected cruises to sea.

Owner and restorer Paul Childs said: "It might have taken everything we have got to



● **HMS Gay Archer at speed**

reach this stage but it has been absolutely worth it to ensure a vessel from our maritime history is kept alive whilst being able to share the thrilling experience out at sea on what could be seen as a mini destroyer!"

Marking Gay Archer's return to sea, Zagreus Films are offering the DVD *Build Your Own Motor Torpedo Boat* at half price.

# Civilians study submarines

A GROUP of 20 students were among the first civilians to undergo a bespoke submarine qualification course run by the Royal Navy at Devonport Naval Base.

The group – a mix of graduates and apprentices from the MOD and defence contractors – are about to embark on an engineering career in submarine design and maintenance.

Based on the Navy's eight-week submarine qualification course for new recruits, the students spent two weeks in a series of lectures on submarine safety, construction, weapons, sensors, propulsion and internal systems.

They also visited HMS Talent and the training simulators used by the Senior Service to provide realistic training for matelots.

WO1 Steve Mooney, the Submarine Qualification Training Officer, said: "Royal Navy submarine qualification is conducted in two stages."

"We conduct what is known as the dry phase here and teach the recruits how the submarine's systems work and all the routines which are carried out onboard."

"They learn everything from the technical detail on how the boat dives and surfaces, to how the nuclear reactor works to drive the submarine."

"They then move onto the wet phase, which takes place in an allocated submarine at sea."

"The training course for civilian students was aimed at giving them a similar insight, to help them understand how we operate, so that they can use that knowledge in their future careers."

The course, arranged by the MOD's Submarines Workforce Management Group at Abbey Wood, is seen as a vital component in the development of submarine support experience.

# Model event at FAA museum

MORE than 2,000 visitors, club members and traders are expected to attend the Fleet Air Arm Museum's model show at Yeovilton this month.

The traders and clubs – some 120 will be represented – will be exhibiting everything from model aircraft to dioramas.

Airfix will be running a 'Make and Paint' workshop and sponsor competitions designed to recognise high achievement in modelling across all disciplines – bring along your best models and you could bag a prize.

Weather permitting, one of the highlights of the show will be a radio-controlled flying display by the award-winning British Model Flying Association.

The museum's own attractions, including Concorde and the Aircraft Carrier Experience, will also be open to visitors.

Doors open at 10am on Saturday February 11, and tickets can be bought online at [www.fleetairarm.com](http://www.fleetairarm.com)

Normal museum admission prices apply, and there is no additional charge for the show.



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# Olympic rings (of steel)

ROYAL Marines in a RIB follow two fast-moving police launches as they chase a 'hijacked' Thames clipper as an action-packed demonstration of how the Royal Navy and police would respond to a terrorist attack during the Olympics reaches its dramatic climax.

Nearly 100 Royal Marines and Fleet Air Arm personnel joined more than 40 Metropolitan Police on London's great artery around the Docklands, Thames Barrier and O2 Arena to show how they would respond should terrorists target the biggest event in Britain since the 1966 World Cup.

The amphibious experts of 539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines put a *smörgåsbord* of craft in the river – two landing craft, two RIBs, four ORC gunboats – alongside patrol boat HMS Blazer and half a dozen vessels from the Metropolitan Police Marine Policing Unit.

Overhead, a Lynx Mk8 from 815 Naval Air Squadron provided

cover as the 'hijacked' Meteor Thames clipper – which typically runs from Royal Woolwich Arsenal Pier to Westminster, carrying upwards of 220 passengers – made its way upstream.

Meteor's sortie up the Thames was brought to a halt by heavily-armed commandos, forcefully boarding the clipper within sight of the Thames Barrier.

The demonstration – dubbed Operation Woolwich Arsenal Pier – was played out in full view of Londoners and, more importantly, the world's media, who were invited to see how the military and police might deal with a terrorist attack on the river during the Games, which open in late July.

The Meteor 'take-down' was part of a week of exercises and training along the Thames to allow the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Met Police to gain a better understanding of working together – and for the Plymouth-based commandos to get to know an unfamiliar stretch of river.

"It's an area of water we don't know very well," said Maj Paul 'Stits' Stinson, second in command of 539 ASRM.

"We've got the capabilities,

## Forces presence at Games

- 5,000 personnel supporting the police and other civilian authorities such as bomb disposal teams, military working dogs and RN support to maritime policing;
- 1,000-strong unarmed 'contingency force' to be deployed in the event of a civil emergency during the Games;
- 1,000 personnel providing logistical support
- up to 7,500 personnel providing venue security
- up to four dozen Naval personnel representing the Senior Service as flag bearer parties at opening and closing ceremonies, plus medal presentations
- HMS Ocean will be moored on the Thames at Greenwich to provide accommodation and logistical support while her flight deck will accommodate RAF Pumas and Army and Fleet Air Arm Lynx which will work with RAF Typhoon jets, based temporarily at RAF Northolt, to provide airspace security;
- flagship HMS Bulwark off Weymouth will provide a maritime command centre for the security effort. She'll also be used by helicopters and as a base for small boats.

we've got the skills, we just need the time to prepare. We always prepare for the unknown.

"We are only here to help the police in the worst-case scenario."

The Met had 44 personnel, including the Force Firearms Unit, on the water in four RIBs,

a command boat and a Targa launch, and in the sky in the form of their Air Support Unit.

"This will be a summer like no other in London," said Met Police Assistant Commissioner Chris Allison, National Olympic Security Coordinator.

"The Thames runs through the very heart of our capital and will be a popular place for people who want to be part of the Olympic spirit.

"There is no specific threat from the river but we would be failing in our duty to ignore it at Games time. What you have seen are the sort of things we can do.

"All of our planning is designed to mitigate against potential risks during the summer of 2012, and this is an example of where we will be using specialist military capability to support us."

The week-long workout was the first visible sign of Operation Olympics, the massive military involvement in support of this year's Games.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said upwards of 13,500 Service personnel would be involved in the operation at its peak.

Mr Hammond said that although the police would be in overall charge of security arrangement, the Government had agreed that the Armed Forces should provide significant support from participation in ceremonial events and logistical assistance to

wide-ranging security duties.

Of those duties, Bulwark's task as a floating command centre off Weymouth is similar to the mission performed by the Royal Navy during the 2005 Fleet Review when a plethora of Royal Marines' raiding and landing craft helped to successfully form a shield around the 170 warships gathered in the Solent to celebrate the bicentenary of Trafalgar.

Seven years later and Mr Hammond said every effort was being made to safeguard the 2012 Games so that competitors and audiences alike could enjoy it peacefully.

He added: "The Olympic and Paralympic Games are once-in-a-generation events for the UK.

"We want them to be secure so that all those competing and attending can enjoy the Games for the celebration of sporting achievement and cultural celebration that it is.

"I have no doubt that the Armed Forces will do a fantastic job – and I look forward to their professionalism and agility being on show on the world stage once again."

Pictures: PO(Phot) Terry Seward, DMC







# A rose amid the ice

IF THE rather mild winter of 2011-12 (well, so far at any rate) is leaving you hankering for ice, snow and the cold, allow the men and women of HMS Montrose to oblige.

It's high summer where they are – but that merely means that the pack ice doesn't extend quite as far.

The latest stage of the Devonport-based frigate's six-month South Atlantic deployment has taken her to the edge of the ice fields at the foot of the earth.

The Type 23 is reaching the half-way point of her Atlantic Patrol (South) tour of duty, providing assurance and support to the 8,500 (ish) British citizens who live on the other side of the Equator from warm and comparatively populous St Helena (4,255 inhabitants) to the icy and remote South Sandwich Islands (population 0).

It is Montrose's aspiration this deployment to visit all British Overseas Territories in the South Atlantic – offering the 180 men and women aboard the frigate some truly stunning sights as she nudged to the edge of a Type 23's operating limits not far from Antarctic pack ice.

As the frigate neared the mass of ice, she found herself bracketed by 'bergy bits' – bigger than growlers, but too small to be icebergs.

Such rare sights brought a substantial number of 'goofers' on to Montrose's upper deck with cameras out in force. They found numerous rafts of penguins (that's a collective noun for the seabirds, not a host of penguins paddling furiously...) staring back at the 4,500 tonnes of Pusser's Grey Funnel Line from growlers and small bergs.

Montrose's 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx – callsign Wildcat – also went aloft, with LA(Phot) James Crawford in the back.

The helicopter returned to mother with some of the most impressive Antarctic imagery we've seen since the days when HMS Endurance surveyed the waters around the frozen continent.

"Working in this part of the world involves long distances but presents us with spectacular scenery," said Montrose's Commanding Officer Cdr Jonathan Lett.

"We often experience sub-zero temperatures because of where we are, and landscapes that are nothing like Britain.

"It's a deployment that many of my ship's company enjoy, because it is so unique."

This, of course, is not a Southern Ocean cruise but an operational deployment – and whilst the images here show relatively benign waters, Montrose has encountered some severe seas.

Cdr Lett added: "We have worked hard as a ship, which is very encouraging."

And from polar exploration to molar exploration...

(Sorry.)

As important as sailors being 'in date' for their fitness tests, so too is dental health.

Dentist's surgeries aren't too commonplace in the middle of the South Atlantic, so if the mountain will not come to Mohammed...

Enter the flying (and sailing) dentists, Surg Lt Cdr (D) Alistair Lovell and his nurse Jade Hutchinson who flew the 8,000 miles from Drake Dental Centre to join the frigate.

They crammed all the kit they needed into four suitcase-size containers to form a 'portable dental unit' setting up shop, well surgery, in Montrose's sickbay.

The best thing about establishing a dentist's aboard the frigate is that you have a captive audience – even the most dentophobic were eventually persuaded to jump in the chair for a check-up.

Indeed, Surg Lt Cdr Lovell peered into the mouths of no fewer than 97 members of the ship's company – that's more than half the souls aboard.

Aside from routine check-ups and hygiene treatment, he was able to perform emergency extractions, root canal fillings and deal with a severely infected wisdom tooth.

After ten days on board, the dental duo could proudly report that nine out of ten members of Montrose's ship's company were fully 'dentally fit' with the remainder undergoing longer-term treatment.

"It is always a challenge for units to remain in date for dental treatment when they are away from the UK for a significant period as Montrose is," said Surg Lt Cdr Lovell.

"We provide a unique capability by being able to deploy with all the equipment we need to conduct a broad range of treatment – this has been a highly successful trip for us and we leave Montrose dentally fit for the remainder of her deployment."

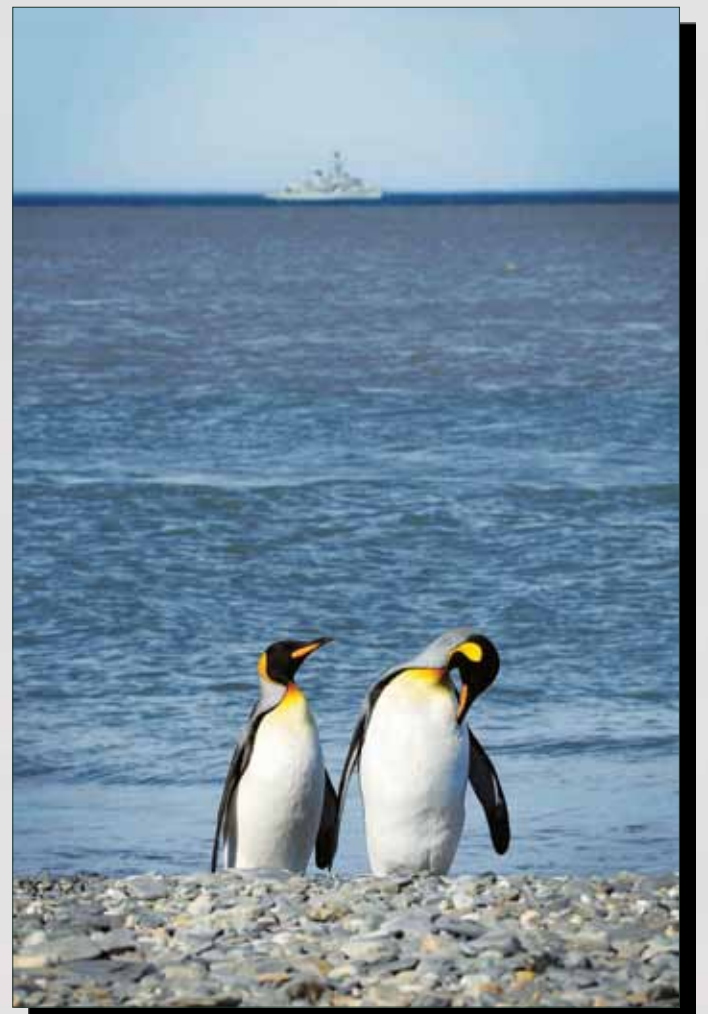
Perhaps the dentists were required because of a sugar fest shortly before their arrival.

Some 500 cakes, baked by members of the 18-berth female mess in the ship's galley during their spare time, were devoured as part of SSAFA's 'big brew up'.

The event is held each October – but with Montrose a tad busy preparing for her deployment proceedings, the brew up was postponed until a quiet(ish) moment during their South Atlantic patrol.

The hard work in the galley paid off, with queues stretching out of the hangar door and on to the flight deck, and many people coming back for seconds. The net result: nearly £500 for the charity.

Some journalists would make a tenuous link between ice and icing, but not us...





# Flying visits

I READ somewhere that one person's crisis is another person's opportunity, and in my case that was HMS Liverpool's long deployment in the Mediterranean last year, writes CPO(SC) Mark Cutts.

The six months we spent off the Libyan coast gave me a chance to indulge my hobby and study the migrating birds, moving from Africa to Europe in the spring, and watch them move back in the autumn.

Mostly, they just whizzed past the ship on their way, but when the visibility was poor and they couldn't see, many stopped for shelter and a much-needed rest on board our ship.

The favoured resting place was in and around the hangar, which was open for most of the time because the ship's helicopter was in constant use.

The WAFUs were always quick off the mark to tell me about these birds – at first because they simply didn't want bird droppings all over their helicopter...

However, after a while they got quite keen on identifying the birds and looking after them, and indeed the rest of the ship's company joined in too.

Many types of bird landed on our decks over the seven months.

Turtle doves and yellow wagtails were regular visitors, swallows and house martins often took shelter in the hangar overnight and warblers would sit on the flight deck nets.

A particular favourite with the crew was the bird with the 'pink Mohican' – in the autumn the hoopoe was a regular visitor, with its black-and-white wings, long curved bill and pink crest.

I very soon got a reputation not just as the bird man of Liverpool but the wildlife man too, so I was sent for whenever any strange creature was found on board.

These included crickets, butterflies, moths and any sightings of whales or dolphins.

● (Left) A male collared flycatcher rests on the cable assembly beneath the tail boom of HMS Liverpool's Lynx helicopter

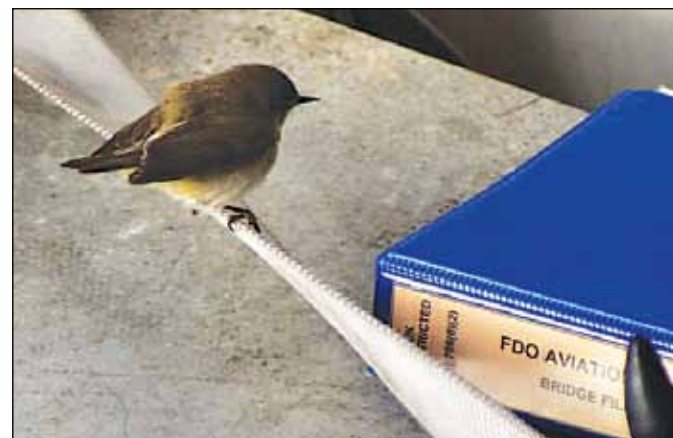
I did, I hasten to add, find time to do my main job as I/C of Supply Chain sub-department, and I can tell you we were pretty busy, but my off-duty hours were often spent on the upper deck with a pair of binoculars or tending a tired and hungry bird.

I first got into birdwatching as a boy in North London, a hobby you can enjoy wherever you are.

However, I soon came to realise that behind the simple pleasure of seeing these lovely creatures was a more serious point, and that is simply that the health of our bird populations very much reflects the health of our own environment.

The Royal Naval Birdwatching Society started off just after World War 2 with a few enthusiasts who started recording seabirds seen at sea, and also land birds that alighted for a rest on ships like Liverpool.

Warship bird records are especially valuable, because warships often go to places where merchant ships do not, so the RNBWS over the years has built up an impressive and valuable database of bird sightings, and that data is vital in analysing trends and problems.



● A chiffchaff lands next to a Flight Deck Officers' aviation manual on board Type 42 destroyer HMS Liverpool

We contributed, for example, to the discovery that albatrosses, especially wandering albatrosses, were in marked decline.

The reason was that these wonderful birds were being caught on the hooks of long-line fishing boats.

Now, that is something that can be remedied by weighting the hooks, and I think we are on the way out of that crisis, but

there will be others no doubt, and birders the world over now keep a sharp eye on trends.

It is good to know that the information we gather on our ships around the world is put to good purpose.

If you want to know more I suggest you visit the RNBWS website ([www.rnbws.org.uk](http://www.rnbws.org.uk)) or if you prefer, contact me at [slashercuts@lycos.com](mailto:slashercuts@lycos.com)



● This squacco heron, a small wading bird with distinctive white wings which migrates to Africa over the winter, was spotted resting on the upper deck of the veteran destroyer



● (Above) A barn swallow rests on a light fitting on the flight deck of HMS Liverpool during its migratory flight between Africa and Europe

● (Left) The 'bird with the pink Mohican' – a hoopoe, with its distinctive crown of feathers, clings to some rope aboard HMS Liverpool





**We are committed to increasing the grants we make to Naval charities that help those in need or distress**



## Where does your money go?

Each year, we grant out about £5 million – of which we grant about £2 million to the serving RN and RM. These grants include paying into your ship, submarine, squadron or RM unit's welfare fund twice a year.

These were the minor grants awarded to the different establishments and ships from December to January:

- Sea King ASaC squadrons: crew room furniture;
- Defence Diving School: gym flooring project;
- HMS Neptune: Sportsdome conference/briefing facilities
- HQ Command: Leach Building HQ Command Telemark Championship

■ RMB Chivenor: Children's Christmas Party (almonised grant with RMCTF)

■ HMS Turbulent: Presentation of awards and Valiant Trophy

■ HQ Band Service: Royal Navy Ski Championship 2012

■ HMS Wildfire: Combined Mess Improvements

■ 42 Commando: RMCTF-42 Cdo Children's Christmas Party

■ Commando Logistic Regiment: RMCTF-CLR Children's Christmas Party

■ 42 Commando: RN personnel to Ski Championship

**Grant: £15,000**

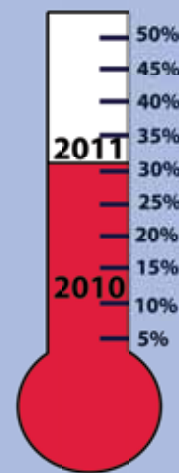
For further information on grants contact Anne Carr by email at [anne.carr@rnmcc.org.uk](mailto:anne.carr@rnmcc.org.uk), or by

phone 023 9254 8093, Mil: 93832 8093.

Payroll giving simply means making a regular donation out of your monthly pay. We're asking for a minimum of £5 a month; if you can manage more, that's great.

We've seen an impressive uptake in numbers over the past year of 20 per cent which is fantastic, but we want to keep improving on these figures so that we can keep improving the lives of the men and women of the Naval Service.

■ Our barometer shows the latest payroll giving figures over the previous two years, and we would like to see the biggest uptake in the next 12 months with your support.



## SUPPORT US



Visit our online store for a range of clothing, gifts, accessories and other items which will help us to support you.

**Umbrella: £15**

[www.rnmcc.org.uk](http://www.rnmcc.org.uk)

## Liz's long burst

(Jackspeak: a lengthy conversation that is mostly one-way)

THE THEME of love this month has made me consider what I love most about the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and everything that goes along with the job – and without a doubt it is *you*, our supporters, and everyone who helps us achieve our mission of raising more to give more.

So, what better way to say thank you than to reward you for your help, support and fundraising efforts...

We are launching the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Fundraising Trophy and Award – and the good news is that you don't have to enter, fill in forms or register; you just have to keep doing the things you are doing – but a bit more.

So, what is it?

We have developed the award to encourage all serving personnel to actively take part in raising money for us through lots of different activities from sponsored events to payroll giving.

Find out more in the Trophy article on this page.

We will be issuing further details and promotional materials over the next few weeks and the trophy and prizes will be awarded annually in February.

To ensure you all get a good head start towards winning the prizes the first Trophy will be awarded in 2013 – so you have plenty of time to build up your contributions.

So, Happy Valentine's Day – keep fundraising!

**Liz Ridgway**  
Director of Fundraising and Marketing,  
The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity  
[liz.ridgway@rnmcc.org.uk](mailto:liz.ridgway@rnmcc.org.uk)

# We'd love your help

HELLO, writes Hilary Jukes, I joined the charity as Community Fundraising Co-ordinator in July 2011, having previously worked in a similar role at Naomi House children's hospice, in Hampshire.

Being Pompey born and bred I am really proud of the city's naval heritage and am delighted to have joined the charity.

I work closely with all our fundraisers making sure they have the support they need and I have met some fantastic people, doing all sorts of fundraising things from holding raffles to organising concerts, black tie dinners and undertaking challenges.

Lots of our supporters are serving in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines and have done sponsored events involving swimming, running marathons, rowing, cycling, boxing and mountaineering.

HMS Sultan rugby team recently held a sponsored waxing... ouch!

We, of course, have lots of support from civilians, business and retired personnel too.

How can you help?

**Organise your own fundraising event.** This can be anything from a cake sale or raffle to taking part in a sponsored sporting event.

How about organising a supermarket bag pack or bucket collection?

Whatever you decide to do let me know and I can help you with t-shirts, running vests, collection tins, logos, sponsor forms etc, as well as give advice on how to promote your event and charity law issues.

We also have a range of items you could sell at your event to raise additional funds.

Please do take lots of photographs of any events you do (use your imagination... giant cheques are so last year!) and send



them through to us.

Make sure you get a copy of next month's *Navy News* to see how you can get involved by joining in a navy-wide fundraising event on June 1 this year.

**Volunteering** is an area we'd really like to develop in order to increase our fundraising activity and help grow our supporter base by raising awareness of the charity amongst the wider community.

Whether you are retired, serving or a civvy could you spare some time to help us?

We need helpers at events such as the British Military Tournament and Portsmouth Air Festival as well as at families' days, open days and events throughout the country.

Could you become a collection pot co-ordinator for your area, or represent the charity at a cheque presentation or attend events and represent us locally?

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, develop your

skills and, most importantly, have lots of fun!

**Events** we organise, or that others organise on our behalf, are an important source of income.

Please do come along and support them where you can. From air shows and open days to concerts and sporting events there's something for everyone.

Would you like to take part in the marathons, put on your running shoes or do a bungee jump anywhere around the country? Get in touch!

To find out details of forthcoming events, keep an eye on this page and our website or 'like' our Facebook.

If you live in the west then you might like to come along to Plymouth Pavilions on February 16.

Jim Davidson, Jethro, Bobby Davro, Rick Wakeman and Claire Sweeney are joined by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines for a charity fundraising gala to raise funds for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Tickets are selling fast and are available from [www.plymouthpavilions.com](http://www.plymouthpavilions.com).

**Legacies.** Naturally, when writing your will your main priority will be to think of family and loved ones.

However by also leaving a gift, of whatever size, to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, you can make a lasting difference to the work of the charity.

Some supporters also ask friends and family to give a donation instead of flowers at the funeral of a loved one.

Whatever you choose to do to support your charity, I am there to assist you. Please do get in touch.

I'd love to hear from you, and we are going to be appointing two more community fundraisers soon – one in the south-west and one in Scotland – so there will be more of us on hand to help you!

We love what you do for us – thank you.

So remember:

**LEGACIES:**

however big or small, they can make a lasting difference;

**ORGANISE** your own fundraising do, occasion or function;

**VOLUNTEER:** get involved and raise awareness of the RNRMC;

**EVENTS:** attend the big events that take place around the country.

## Trophy up for grabs

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is launching a fundraising trophy and award. The award will be presented annually to the winning team (ship, boat, establishment, squadron or Royal Marines unit) which has contributed the most during that year to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

It will be awarded to two beneficiaries – the winning establishment and an individual/team.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Trophy will comprise of:

■ **A major trophy:** that will be passed to the winning team and retained for one year.

■ **A minor replica trophy:** that will be retained by the winning team.

■ **An establishment/ship/unit prize of £4,000** to be allocated as the Commanding Officer directs.

■ **An individual/team prize of vouchers** to be spent on fitness, challenge events, etc. with an accompanying certificate for the individual(s)/team.

To ensure fairness of competition (eg: smaller ships vs larger training establishments where more personnel will have more opportunity to raise a larger amount of money), the annual award will be judged by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Fundraising and Marketing Committee, who will make the award based not only on income generated, but by considering the variety of fundraising activities undertaken, awarding points for innovation, fun and teamwork, plus the amount of positive exposure and PR achieved for the charity.

And we are committed to a pledge that any funds raised by participating RM units are awarded to the RMCTF campaign fund to help them reach their £6 million target.

## RNRMC works together with RNBT

THE Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) is the largest of the naval charities that focuses on helping those who have served or are still serving in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines as Warrant Officers and below, and their dependants, who find themselves in need or distress.

The RNBT's beneficiaries are collectively known as the RNBT Family.

The RNBT makes grants to assist people in a variety of circumstances, such as helping towards living expenses, house repairs, disability aids, job training and much more.

Every year the charity

responds to over 4,000 applications for assistance with grants totalling around £1.5 million.

### Annuities

The greatest need of some older members of the RNBT Family is with those struggling to make ends meet on very low incomes and the RNBT makes regular payments to supplement their income known as Annuities.

Although the sums involved are modest in amount, they make a real difference to the quality of life of those receiving them; over 1,200 annuitants are assisted in this way.

### Grants to organisations

Limited financial assistance is given to a number of organisations that help members of the RNBT Family good examples of which are hospices in Portsmouth and Plymouth.

### Care home

The RNBT runs its own care and nursing home called Pembroke House where up to 55 older members of the RNBT Family receive nursing or personal care.

### Housing Almshouse

The RNBT is the sole trustee for the John Cornwell VC National Memorial that comprises six semi-detached cottages for disabled and infirm sailors and their families.

The almshouse was built following a public subscription

after the Battle of Jutland to provide a lasting memorial to Boy Seaman John Cornwell who was awarded the VC for his actions onboard HMS Chester during the battle.

### Advice

There is a wealth of informed advice available either on-line or over the phone from the RNBT's experienced, knowledgeable and helpful staff on welfare, financial and entitlement matters.

For more information visit the website: [rnbt.org.uk](http://rnbt.org.uk) or phone 02392 690112.

■ **So how does the RNRMC help the RNBT? We gave grants of £1.34 million in March and a further £269,000 in November to assist the RNBT in the fantastic work they do.**







07:15



07:20



08:00



04:30



20:15



18:00



17:30

# A day in the life – from

**JOHN Lennon was rather excited by a fatal car crash and 4,000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire.**

We can offer 190 baguettes, 100 sausages, buff Royal Marines working out, a couple of Merlin sorties, sea boat drills, and zumba fitness.

For the first time, we can give you a snapshot of a day in the life of a Royal Navy warship on deployment.

That ship is HMS Somerset, whose six-month stint keeping piracy and other criminal activities in the Indian Ocean in check ends this month when she returns to Devonport having handed over patrol duties to her sister Westminster.

Somerset hit the international headlines late last year courtesy of some very public pirate busts.

Such high-seas drama is very exciting – especially when machine gun fire is thrown into the mix – but the limelight is cast only on a core few: the boarding team, aviators and gunners.

Behind the 'delivery of effect' sit the support echelons.

Every day at sea or in harbour – irrespective of the day's tasking – the warfare support teams work to ensure Somerset remains operationally capable to achieve her mission.

While their story might lack excitement, their actions ensure that they are a key element of Somerset's team success.

Throughout the day the bridge, operations room, ship's control centre and main communications office are manned constantly.

Hourly rounds are conducted of running equipment. Eyes and sensors search the sea for navigational hazards and tell-tale signs of illegal activity.

Enough of the background, on to the day in question.

This comprehensive – though not exhaustive – 24-hour diary, compiled by Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Paul Evans, is factually correct and encompasses a 'quiet day' with no operational boardings.

Somewhere off the coast of Somalia Her Majesty's Ship Somerset glides through the darkness in her designated patrol area.

For the 200 embarked souls, the day commences on the bridge at 0400 Hours – it is midnight in the UK – and another working day is beginning...

Pictures: LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd, FRPU West



## Morning Watch (0400-0800)

**0400** 'Maritime Awareness Call' from the Bridge by 22-year-old Sub Lt Scott Sabin: "Securite, Securite, Securite. Good Morning all ships. Combined Maritime Forces Warships are constantly monitoring Bridge-to-Bridge channel 16. If you require assistance or to report any suspicious or illegal activity, contact the nearest coalition warship on channel 16. Out."

**0400** Chef Charlotte Head gets up in the 26-berth women's mess; she showers and changes into her chef's rig alone as the majority of her mess are still asleep.

**0400** Chef Head begins making breakfast for Somerset's 200-strong ship's company; this includes the baking of around 190 baguettes.

**0400** Weather signal sent by 32-year-old LMET Ashwell from Biggleswade.

**0400** In the operations room Crypto is loaded to allow Combined Task Force ships and aircraft to pass vital tactical information.

**0400** Std Pompey gets up and showers ready to prepare for breakfast in the wardroom.

**0400** The duty marine engineering 'tanky' gets up to do the morning fuel transfer and distributes the morning fuel tank status chit.

**0400** On the bridge: Officer of the Watch Sub Lt Scott Sabin hails a merchant vessel by radio and conducts a standard query.

**0400** AB Samantha Borthwick is temporarily released from the bridge to make a round of tea (she is the self-professed "best wets-maker" onboard).

**0400** Std Pompey begins her preparations for the wardroom breakfast.

**0400** Wtr Lovatt gets up, showers and dresses before the queue begins as there are only two showers for 29 women.

**0400** The ops room is set up for daily operations and tasking briefing.

**0400** Chef Head begins cooking breakfast for the ship's company: approx 100 sausages and 7kg of bacon.

**0400** The Officer of the Watch calls the Executive Officer (who currently has conduct) to give him his morning situation report.

**0400** Officer of the Watch provides a wake-up call for the Commanding Officer.

**0400** Call the Hands piped from the bridge by AB Borthwick; the ship's company awakes.

**0400** Chef Head opens the breakfast counter (only a few trickle through this early) and Std Pompey starts to serve breakfast in the wardroom.

**0400** The on-watch Electronic Warfare leading seaman makes his final preps for the Command Update Brief in the operations room.

**0400** Shipping report from the Bridge to the XO.

**0400** Sunrise, Somerset's navigation lights are switched off.

**0400** Morning checks of the ship's boats are conducted and signed for.

**0400** Breakfast for the leading stores accountant in the junior rates dining hall (with about 20 others.)

**0400** Routine check of meteorological equipment is conducted on the bridge.

**0400** The daily morning sitrep is piped by the Officer of the Watch for the benefit of the ship's company.

**0400** The leading medical assistant opens sickbay for fresh cases; there are no 'customers'.

**0400** Watch handover in the ship's control centre and bridge (Lts Dan White and Richard Dobson, AB Watt and AB Wilcock.)

**0400** Closure of counters in the junior and senior rates' dining halls; fresh sausages and bacon are cooked in the galley for off-going watchkeepers.

**0400** The off-going duty leading engineering technician (weapon engineering) provides the daily overnight brief to the Weapon Engineer Officer.

**0400** The ops room Supervisor prepares the hourly report to Combined Task Force 151.

## Forenoon Watch (0800-1200)

**0800** The ship's 'day workers' turn to.

**0800** The morning command update brief begins in the ops room.

**0800** The leading stores accountant prints off signals for stores demands and updates logs for Fleet requirements.

**0800** LPT Vicky Jarvis and LS Dempsey organise waste in the ship's gash compactor. "It's hot – and very smelly!"

**0800** The marine engineering diesel part of ship carry out boat checks in preparation for potential boarding operations.

**0800** ET(WE) Jones conducts morning preps of the ship's mounted 7.62 Mk44 Minigun.

**0800** LSA Zoe Sleeman has to deep clean the female showers as part of mess chief's jobs of the morning.

**0800** All marine engineer section junior rates carry out daily maintenance tasks.

**0800** Warrant Officer 2 (Sensors) reviews the weapon engineering operational defect state.

**0800** The junior rates' counter closes and the standby watch take over from Chef Head; around six chefs are now in the galley along with the chief petty officer caterer.

**0800** LET Lisa Lee conducts checks of Somerset's 7.62in general purpose machine gun buffered mounts.

**0800** Air weapons maintainer CPO Dave Reynolds commences his secondary role as Flight Deck Officer for the day.

**0800** Heads of Department morning 'prayers' (briefings) take place in the wardroom, to deconflict potentially emergent inter-departmental programming issues.

**0800** Navigator's Yeoman, AB Lowry, updates the ship's WECDIS navigation system.

**0800** PO 'Bill' Bailey resumes fault-finding on one of the ship's combat system data highways.

**0800** CPO Dave 'Carl' Remson records his daily checks on the Unit Maintenance Management System and checks the daily signal reading log.

**0800** Deep cleaning commences of the ship's Seawolf missile silo (ready for the impending captain's forward rounds).

**0800** Sonar maintainer/RN boarding team technical searcher, PO Hammond, leads the morning's Royal Marines physical circuit training.

**0800** LET(WE) Lisa Lee conducts daily maintenance of Somerset's 30mm armour-piercing automated small calibre guns.

**0800** ET Jones commences daily maintenance of Somerset's 4.5 inch medium range gun (OX40 greasing routine.)

**0800** An Action Information Group meeting is held to formulate a plan for the upper deck during Somerset's forthcoming ship's maintenance period.

**0800** Daily 'preparations for firing' are conducted on Somerset's GSA8 medium-range gun control system.

**0800** Machinery breakdown drills commence. Std Pompey is cleaning wardroom flats (passageways), cabins and bathrooms.

**0800** The leading medical assistant conducts continual personal development tasks.

**0800** ET Jones cleans the electro-optic device (targeting sensor) for the automated small calibre gun system.

**0800** The leading medical assistant begins general admin and sees 'drop in' visitors.

**0800** A computer workstation is reported as defective in the combined workshop. It is replaced with a spare to restore services while a repair is carried out.

**0800** In the catering office the galley manager does the paperwork for the following week and the other chefs begin making up rolls for the ship's company lunches. Veg for the evening meal is also prepped at this time along with daily cleaning jobs.

**0800** Fire control radar maintainer CPO Patten continues to write SJARS (Servicemen's and Servicewomen's Joint Appraisal Reports) in his capacity as a first reporting officer (IRO).

**0800** Following completion of daily checks, marine engineer section heads start their daily admin and ensure their planned maintenance is up to date on UMMS (the Unit Maintenance Management System.)

**0800** Having completed aircraft pre-flight checks, a flying brief is held in the sonar display room.

**0800** Stand easy. March on 'Phil (McKenna) the can man' (the NAAFI opens for business.)

**0800** PO Peres is producing work requisition forms for next year's docking period.

**0800** Chef Head is called for 'FOD plod' so leaves her station in the galley and heads to the upper deck.

**0800** LSA attends 'FOD plod' (foreign object debris patrol to look for any material which could damage an aircraft) to prepare for flying

**0800** Aircraft ranged on deck.

**0800** Flight deck and ship prepared for Merlin helicopter ground run.

**0800** Weapons engineers continue cleaning the weapons lobby in preparation for the forthcoming captain's rounds.

**0800** Turn to after stand easy. M3A section carry out maintenance on the defective high pressure air compressor.

**0800** Wtr Lovatt is organising flights for outbound and inbound squad changeover, budget travel forms and balancing the ships budget on spending.



16:00



15:45



15:40





# From Alert 5 to Zumba

The weapon engineer department management team (WEO, DWEO, WO(S) and WO(W)) conduct the weekly planning meeting in the WEO's cabin.

Std Pompey prepares for serving lunch in the wardroom.

The leading stores accountant raises E126s for lost items ready for investigation.

Marine engineering M2G section carry out some maintenance on the diesel.

PO Hammond and ET Rapley clean 3E for the captain's rounds.

Boat drill. Royal Marines and RN boat coxswains practise manoeuvring seaboats as if they were under fire.

Merlin helicopter ground run commences on the Flight Deck.

Aft Seawolf fire control radar maintainer, PO Peres, assists the ship's command system maintainer PO Bailey in diagnosing the cause of a combat system highway fault.

Head of the missile group CPO Mitchell works on collating a list of compartments equipped with Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS).

Afternoon watchkeepers grab a quick bite to eat before taking the handover to go on watch.

The contents of the ops room safe, containing cryptographic material, is mustered correct.

The flight consume filled rolls for early lunch.

The Afternoon Watch closes up on the bridge (Officer of the Watch 31-year-old Lt Mike Williams from Wincanton, Second Officer of the Watch, 26-year-old Lt Mike Quinn from Lancaster, Quartermaster 22-year-old AB Barrowman from Norwich, and tactical operator AB Rory Arnold, 24, from Banbury).

## Afternoon Watch (1200-1600)

Lunch commences for non-watchkeepers and off-going watch (junior and senior rates' dining halls and the wardroom.

Flight make up rescue hoist test weight in preparation for forthcoming partial test flight.

LET(WE) Lynn Donnachie aged 24 from Ayrshire conducts essential maintenance on seaboard boarding command system (which is key to Somerset's boarding capability.)

Zumba time!! LPT Vicky Jarvis leads XOA (Lt Louisa Foreman), DWEO (Lt Emma Bould), LS Alex Dempsey and Chef Charlotte Head in keep-fit dancing in the midships cross passage!

Sonar maintainer PO Hammond prepares 'Story Book Waves' (recorded bedtime stories to be sent home to sailors' children) for interested members of the ship's company.

Ship goes into ops control to conduct flying (the on-watch principal warfare officer in the operations room gives control orders to the Officer of the Watch on the bridge, and controls the aircraft via Leading Air Controller Emma Heathcote.)

Aircrew (Lt Cooper, Lt Farr, Lt Carter, Lt Cdr Fabrice Dehandschoewercker, PO ACMN Scullion) man the Merlin aircraft ready for a partial test flight.

CPO Main supervises electrical switchboard drills.

Std Pompey cleans silverware, flats and passageways in vicinity of the wardroom.

PO(WTR), LWtr and Wtr Fiona Lovatt field general enquiries and carry out daily admin in the ship's office.

Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Paul Evans gives a Seawolf brief to DWEO and PO Hammond (in preparation for their forthcoming promotion boards) and PWO(A) for system familiarisation.

CPO Remson re-checks the weapon engineer signal reading log in the combined technical office.

Leading stores accountant attends FOD plod for 'Prepare for Flying'

Deep cleaning of the 'Gunbay flat' weapons lobby by WEs continues in preparation for the captain's rounds.

CPO Remson contacts the stores office for an update on a defect-related stores demand.

The port gas turbine is started (enabling the ship's combined diesel-electric and gas (CODLAG) propulsion system to run on 'sided boost'.)

PO Jewell carries out corrective maintenance on his high pressure salt water pump in the Avcat pump space.

XO's defaulters table (the deputy logistics officer, leading regulator, Wtr Lovatt and the accused in attendance) is held in the senior rates' dining hall for personnel who have broken Naval regulations.

ET(WE)s Faucher, Lovewell and Rapley conduct deep-cleaning of the conversion machinery room for the captain's rounds.

CPO Patten and PO Peres transfer tested equipment from forward to aft Seawolf fire control radar.

Missile group head CPO Mitchell accompanies a member of his division to executive officer's summary hearing.

Merlin helicopter launches from the flight deck. Flight Deck Officer is CPOET(WE) Dave Reynolds.

PO Wilsmore replaces a defective relay in one of the steering motor starter panels.

ET(ME) Fowler brings the Helicopter In-Flight Refuelling (HIFR) hose to Alert 5 (five minutes' notice.)

AET Bennett emails his wife via onboard satellite connection.

With Merlin safely in the air, the senior maintenance rating undergoes a training session on the ship's exercise bike.

CPO Patten contacts the stores office for an update on a defect-related stores demand.

CPO Remson finishes repairs to a computer in the combined technical office and rechecks the weapons engineering defect log.

As lessons learnt from a recent boarding operation, the navigating officer (Lt Joe Verrechia), leading medical assistant and Standing Sea Emergency Party leading hands conduct a 'Flap Sheet Brief' to refine sustainable routines during prolonged boarding serials.

The leading medical assistant, ship's communications officer, N3, Std Pompey and PO Dudman attend a planning meeting for the forthcoming visit to Dubai.

PO(Wtr), LWtr and Wtr Lovatt field general enquiries and conduct daily administrative procedures in the Ship's Office.

ET(WE) Faucher conducts a command leadership and management development task, by delivering a COSHH presentation to the rest of the weapon engineering department in the junior rates' dining hall.

Wtr Lovatt does her 'narrative' checks in preparation for 'Hands to Boarding Stations' expected within the next 24 hours. She checks that the Dictaphones and spare laptop are charged, and that her body armour is in place on the bridge.

A fire exercise is instigated in the port gas turbine module. For exercise the 'fire' is limited to the module, but full reactions ensure that a potentially ship-threatening scenario does not develop if this had been for real.

ET(ME) Johnson carries out primary fire checks on the gas turbine for the module fire exercise.

Watch change-over on the Bridge. On watch: Officer of the Watch Scott Sabin, Second Officer of the Watch Lt Rich Dobson, Quartermaster AB Sam Borthwick and Tactical Operator AB Rhys White.

## First Dog Watch (1600-1800)

Aircraft landed on for rotors running fuel & re-launch.

LS(AWT) Walsh goes running. Due to flying operations the Flight Deck is out of bounds. Consequently the upper deck 'running route' is limited aft to the minor cross passage.

The Merlin helicopter conducts partial test flight (rescue hoist test).

The leading stores accountant runs three miles for her charity contribution and enjoys half an hour of sunbathing!

Duty weapon engineering senior rate CPO Hull conducts 'end of working day rounds'.

Steering gear break down.

Aircraft lands on deck, shuts down and reverts readiness to Alert 30.

Aircraft receives fresh water wash down from AET Ormiston.

Ship reverts to bridge control.

ET(ME)2s carry out task book training.

LS Walsh (and others) gets changed into night rig (2CW's - blue (black) trousers and tropical (short sleeved) white shirt) ready for his evening watch in the ops room.

Std Pompey is preparing for dinner in the wardroom.

Lt Dan White assumes responsibility as Officer of the Watch on the bridge.

## Second Dog Watch (1800-2000)

Flying Brief for evening flying sortie.

Junior Rates clean up their Messdecks, Flats and Heads ready for evening rounds.

Gash compactor sorting with LPT Jarvis and LS Dempsey.

Chicken wrapped in bacon with rice for dinner for the flight (who are attending watch-keepers' scan (dinner) due to their forthcoming flying serial.)

Non-watchkeepers' scan commences: 40 junior rates sitting and queuing for dinner in the junior rates' dining hall.

First sitting for dinner in the wardroom. 'Darken ship' is piped.

Aircraft re-launched.

Command Brief. Cdr Paul Bristowe has resumed conduct. The Heads of Department (air, logistics, marine engineer, weapon engineer, and warfare), Executive Warrant Officer, Navigating Officer and PO(EW) muster in his cabin to brief him on any significant day's events and look ahead to tomorrow.

Chef Head rings her dad to say "Happy Birthday" (56 today) via satellite and emails other friends and family.

Watch handover.

## First Watch (2000-2359)

Second sitting for dinner in the wardroom (predominantly comprised of those who attended the command brief.)

Watchkeepers' scan in the junior rates' dining hall.

Female junior rates relax in the 26-man mess.

Aircraft lands on.

Aircraft is disarmed (by PO Cooper), washed (by AET Bennett) and secured to deck to be left ranged overnight.

Lt Farr celebrates his 2,000 flying hours in style

Classified waste is shredded.

Due to a requirement to raise High Frequency communication transmitter power levels, the ship assumes 'HF State Red' overnight, putting areas of the upper deck out of bounds. Warning boards are rigged and a pipe is made.

Flight department finishes and retires to messdecks for shower, relaxing and bed.

The operations room stateboards are updated to reflect current tasking and communications.

The senior maintenance rating visits the captain in his cabin to get an A2 Operational Defect signal signed.

The senior maintenance rating visits the main communications office to ensure his signal is transmitted.

The Commanding Officer's night orders are brought to the bridge.

Sub Lt Sabin assumes responsibility as Officer of the Watch on the Bridge.

## Middle Watch (0001-0400)

Midnight rounds conducted by CPO Hull and the middle watch roundsman.

The officer of the day conducts accommodation and security rounds.

POET(WE) Bailey is shaken for a defect on the ship's DNA combat system computer.

AB Barrowman and AB Arnold assume watches on the bridge.

The captain takes a shipping report from the Officer of the Watch.

Watch handover to the morning watchkeepers.





# Vernon's many vital roles

Whilst attending a Vernon Old Instructors' Trafalgar Night Dinner at Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth, I became aware of Project Vernon.

This campaign's goal is to install a monument to commemorate the Naval Heritage of the HMS Vernon site, now Gunwharf Quays.

Great credit should be given to those who strived to get this project funded with an initial design of a diver and mine, to which I have donated.

However, many who regularly served in Vernon since WWII, through the Cold War and up to Vernon's closure in 1977, are anxious that the full wide purpose of this Underwater Warfare Establishment is not lost or diluted.

The original wooden hulks that formed the early torpedo/mine school are well documented. Underwater Warfare changed rapidly following WWII in Vernon. There was a shift from the heavy weight destroyer/cruiser-launched torpedoes to light weight anti-submarine.

Also the long-used depth charge moved to ASW mortars. One also should not forget the Navy's ASW Nuclear Depth Bomb. Its training, handling and storage took place here.

These underwater weapons with their improved Sonar/Radar control systems were a major part of Vernon's work, as was the shift from mine sweeping to mine hunting with expansion of diving training.

As someone said, if you attended a Vernon ceremonial divisional parade, the vast numbers of men and their specialisations involved could be clearly seen.

At the height of the Cold War in the 1950s to 70s, the RN's anti-submarine capability was huge and second only to the US.

This was the UK effort to counter the then impressive Soviet submarine threat of some 500 boats.

This should not devalue in any way the mine warfare and diving work which was an integral part of Vernon's wider underwater warfare activities.

Also, we should not forget the birth of the RN's electrical branches there before HMS Collingwood.

Many of us hope that all those involved in recording Portsmouth's naval heritage will take this opportunity to support and preserve all the key aspects of Vernon's history on this important waterfront area in modern-day Portsmouth.

– R J Nicholls, (Ex FCPO TASI) Godalming, Surrey

# My body art got past the recruiters

IN THE letter by Brian Bloom (December) concerning WO1 Stephenson, he raises the question 'are tattoos now allowed at Raleigh?'

I read an article in my morning paper about a year ago concerning a young man in Portsmouth who had breezed through the selection process at his local recruiting office, only to be turned down when they saw he had a single letter tattooed behind one ear.

So my question would be 'When were visible tattoos banned by the RN?'

I joined up when Hartlepool had its own recruiting office in Church Square, and I had very visible tattoos on the back of my hands, namely a black panther's head on the left and a

galleon on my right.

The only time they were mentioned during the nine years I served was when they were added to Visible Distinguishing Marks on my service documents, as tattoos on both hands and arms.

Another question I have is, when all Seamen-related branches were changed in the RN, what became of GIs and Chief GIs?

What did they become under the new branches?

Who is their equivalent now regarding drill instruction, etc.?

As an afterthought, I didn't like 'that cap,' either. Those awfully nice quiet fellows at Whale Island didn't need a funny hat to get their point across!

– Ian 'Doc' Holliday AB QA2 1964-73, Hartlepool

# No Gunners in the Navy

IN the past 75 years, there have been ships and submarines named HMS Hotspur, HMS Manchester, HMS United, HMS Liverpool and even HMS Chelsea, but no HMS Arsenal.

Is that an indication that none of Their Lordships ever supported the Gunners, a team that has always been in the top flight of English football?

Rugby fans, and Chief Petty Officers, will note HMS Exeter, HMS Gloucester, HMS Harlequin, HMS Newcastle and HMS Falcon, HMS Saracen, HMS Wasp, HMS Worcester and HMS Warrior.

There's not been an HMS Leicester for centuries, although an HMS Tiger, of course, only one ever HMS Northampton and an HMS Shark but no Sale, although that is what seems to be the fate of too much of the Fleet

– Lester May, Camden Town, London

# Wartime Orange Wednesday?

DURING World War 2, with oranges in short supply, a destroyer captain en route to the UK via North Africa apparently loaded up his ship with oranges as a gift

to the children of Southend-on-Sea. Can anyone verify this story? Given the number of children in the town, did they get one each?

– Colin Taylor, Ilford,



# Military wives are given a voice at last

I WAS delighted to read your website coverage about the Military Wives Choir welcoming home HMS Turbulent ([www.navynews.co.uk](http://www.navynews.co.uk)) – see page 5.

In my view, the intense media interest in the development of the choir under Gareth Malone's tutelage has gone some way towards educating the civilian population about the challenges that Service families face.

It is through such education that Service personnel and their families will achieve the sort of recognition and support that they deserve and that the Armed Forces Covenant describes as the nation's moral obligation to them.

What people have found so moving, I think, is to have been given a glimpse of the sometimes painful reality of military life, of which, hitherto, they were largely unaware.

Viewers who watched the TV programme could not help but be touched by seeing the women who participated in The Choir blossom as Gareth sensitively drew out feelings that ordinarily they kept hidden.

# The day my wife took Revenge

I READ with interest the story about HMS Vengeance and her Families' Day under the sea (December, page 44)

The CO, Cdr Blythe, commented that he thought this was the first time that such an event had taken place.

Not so, I'm sorry to inform him, as a similar event took place back in 1978 when I was MCC Chief on HMS Revenge (Port)

A number of our wives and girlfriends were invited to join us for the 'voyage' between Coulport and Faslane, which included a dip

beneath the waves off the Isle of Arran.

The event was, I believe, instigated and sanctioned by the late Admiral Lord Fieldhouse, who was at the time Captain SM10.

My recollections of the trip are rather vague after 33 years, but I do remember having lunch in the Senior Rates' Mess with my wife and Lady Fieldhouse. What good company she was, a most interesting and gracious lady.

My other memories of the day is that, for once, it was a beautiful

Far from undermining the women's capacity to cope with the unique demands of military life, the expression of their emotions actually strengthened their resolve and encouraged them to be mutually supportive.

Gareth displayed an unusual level of empathy in recognising so quickly the relative isolation of Servicemen's wives who live in military communities and the importance for their well-being and self-confidence of 'giving them a voice.'

His discoveries echo some of my own research findings (described in *Relocation, Gender and Emotion: A Psycho-Social Perspective on the Experiences of Military Wives* published last year).

One of the recommendations that I made is that emotional upheavals should be recognised as a normal aspect of military lifestyles.

Once there is greater awareness of the normality of these distressing feelings, it will become easier for them to be discussed and addressed, rather than being unhelpfully denied as tends to be the case currently.

– Dr Sue Jervis, BFPO 26

# Deeply sorry to miss you

THE MEMBERS of the Seven Seas Naval Officers' Club were surprised, indeed embarrassed, to learn from *Global Reach* (January) that a ballistic missile submarine was on patrol beneath the Seven Seas.

Surprised, because the club is usually informed when a naval vessel is in the area so that, following the tradition dating back to 1868 of its predecessor the Royal Navy Club, it can send an RPC and invite the Captain and officers to use the club whilst they are in the vicinity.

Embarrassed because the main core of members, being serving or retired naval officers, should always be aware of what is happening in their vicinity.

It would be appreciated if you would pass on our regards and apologies to the captain of the submarine, and assure him that he and his officers will always be most welcome to come up and join us in a glass at the Club.

– Chairman and Members, Seven Seas Club, Simon's Town, South Africa

# Safety matters

THE PLEDGE *Lethal to our enemies, safe to ourselves* (November page 28) made by the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, can only be applauded.

Charlie Buoy in Plymouth Sound was no stranger to me in the 1960s when 'jumping' for HMS Ark Royal.

It is good to see the buoy has increased in size and also has a safety rail, and the lifejackets worn by the ship's company are less cumbersome.

The old adage of 'one hand for the ship and one for yourself' is still true today.

The mistake of leaving lengths of 'messenger rope' as seen in your picture strewn underfoot is also true to this day.

Perhaps in the interests of safety someone should attend to that?

– Bob Hufflet (retired shipwright) Marlow, Bucks

# BZ and KBO

AFTER reading your paper for some years now, I have come to the opinion that you have a missing article from each edition.

There are articles on swap drafts, promotions, deaths, etc, but there is one thing missing.

It's a congratulations column for those in the service who have reached the 22-year milestone and haven't submitted their notice to leave.

As we don't get any thanks from those up above for reaching this point and continuing on, I do think that at least someone should say 'thank you for your service so far, and well done.'

Yes, I am about to reach my 22 point this year (already there in 2011 with boy's time though) so maybe it could be up and running by then!

– WO2 Derek Jenkinson, FOST, FASMAT, Faslane

# Opinion

READING the many letters in our Comment pages about who was the youngest boy to join the post-war Navy (the current record-holder is Mike Smith, at 14, but he may be challenged yet) it's striking how precise the memories are – names, dates, classmates, teachers, lessons – many are recalled with complete precision.

Proof, if it were needed, of the lasting impression the training establishments left on the young people who went through their gates. They entered as boys and left as highly-trained, skilled and self-reliant young men who could turn their hands to anything.

It's a style of teaching and discipline completely different from today's, and drawing comparisons between their generation and following ones would be futile when the

world has changed so much.

The current generation of teenagers is certainly more affluent in material terms than the St Vincent and Ganges boys. They might, however, envy the previous generations for their sense of purpose, and the self-respect which came from doing a skilled job in the finest Navy in the world.

On a markedly more sombre note, Derek West, of the HMS Phoebe Association, has written about the boys from his own ship who were killed in World War 2.

Many shipmates will be attending the service at Portsmouth Cathedral to remember the 534 Boy Seamen who were killed in action – a sobering reminder of what was expected from our young people only a few generations ago.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD



# NAVY NEWS

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# JACK

BY TUGS



## Happy, dashing Manxman

I REFER to Vic Everest's letter (November) and that of Charles Fisher (December) concerning HMS Manxman's top speed.

As a point of interest, I was serving as a commissioned Gunner in the ship as we dashed down to Port Said in December 1951, and was on the bridge, as Officer of the Watch for the 'middle' as we steamed at best speed of 37.3 knots.

This was verified by the navigating and engineer Officers.

— Cdr Edward J Sawkins, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire

...IT was so good to read the letter from Vic Everest about Manxman.

I feel that I was a part of it all, as at the time I had just finished my time in the WRNS and was married to a Petty Officer, the Buffer, in Manxman.

She sailed from Milford Haven for the Med and I flew out to find that she had sailed for the Suez Canal.

I found the flat that he had arranged and waited

for her return to Malta – it was later before many of the other wives arrived.

My daughter was born in Malta and Manxman was off the South of France on that date, but she was christened aboard (and I have often wondered whether her name was inscribed on the bell).

I have a small snapshot of Captain Trevor Lean, my husband and myself on board.

I can recall the names of so many and wonder how they all are now?

Unfortunately I cannot recall Vic Everest. I believe the Engineer Commander also went to Gibraltar, as did the navigator (who recently crossed the bar) and the ship's doctor.

Manxman came home for the Coronation Review I think, and I flew back and landed on Derby Day.

My husband passed away three years ago, by then a Lieutenant, but we so often recalled our very happy Malta/Manxman days.

It was so good to read that letter.

— Ruth Cooper, Waterlooville, Hants

## Carrying on the family service

WHILST I cannot beat Samantha Dunn (letters, November) in terms of family service, I can submit a similar claim, however, a claim which is still on-going.

I joined the Navy at HMS Raleigh in 1960. After the closure of the WRNS new entry training establishment, my daughter joined there too in 1984.

After the closure of HMS Fisguard across the road from Raleigh, my son joined at Raleigh too, in 1990.

My daughter completed her Part One training at Raleigh, then, as a result of HMS Pembroke being closed, remained in Raleigh for her Part Two training as a

Wren Wtr (G). My son went on to HMS Collingwood for his Part Two training, as a Weapons Electrical Artificer.

All three of us were in the Navy together for a few years, my daughter leaving first to get married (to an ex-Navy man) and start a family.

I retired in 1992, my son is still serving. My 16-year-old grandson is still at school, but is seriously thinking of following his mother father, grandfather and uncle into the Senior Service.

My late father-in-law served during the war as a Royal Marine, my oldest nephew was a green beret too, and on my wife's side,

I had three brothers-in-law, two of whom were Supply Dept Chief Petty Officers and one a killick stoker.

I met my wife when she was a telephone operator in the Maritime Headquarters in Pitreavie Castle in Rosyth.

At a rough estimate, my family has given more than 154 years' service to the Crown, and still counting.

My son's first ship was HMS Newcastle, the ship I stood by whilst she was being built in Wallsend on the Tyne, and did the first four years of her life in.

J D Turnbull, ex Master at Arms, Dunfermline, Fife

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E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

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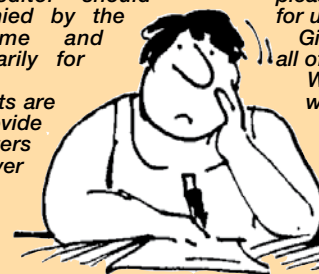
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# Step forward, the youngest recruit

## Jack's singular sense of style

THIS IS what the Comment pages are all about, controversy on topics that rumble on from issue to issue, such as the fast minelayer HMS Manxman's mythical speed. I cannot let Lt Cdr Hagger's letter (December) go without making a reply.

To recap, he and his twin brother joined the Royal Navy at HMS St Vincent on June 10 1958 aged 15 years 103 days.

He asked: "Excluding those who lied about their age on enrolment, how many ex-Naval Boys (post World War 2) can claim to have joined at such a young age?"

Here's one – and no doubt there will be others, perhaps we have more than one ex-Boy who joined on his 15th birthday.

My date of birth is May 27 1938 and I joined HMS Ganges on June 9 1953, aged 15 years and 13 days.

Just a small dig – Ganges' Boys always did it better.

– Eddie Summerfold, Secretary, HMS Opossum Association, Bury, Lancs

...I WAS born on April 24 1947 and joined HMS Ganges on May 1 1962 at the age of 15 years and seven days.

Did this make me the youngest recruit in 1962?

John Hallam, ex FAA Armourer, Yeovil, Somerset

...I WAS BORN on April 5 1940 and entered HMS Ganges at the age of 15 years 28 days. That is 75 days younger (almost a lifetime then).

I am almost certain I was not the youngest of that intake.

– Mick George, ex A/B, Moulton, Northampton

...THE REGULATIONS to enlist as an Artificer Apprentice stated you had to be 15 years old on September 1.

Having been born on August 27 1942, I joined Fisgard on September 9 1957 at the age of 15 years and 14 days!

Amazingly, some ten days later I signed a form to say I would serve until I was 30 years old!

I served until I was 30, the first three years only counting as boys' time, but even then, after 12 years' service, my leaving present was £246, and no pension as I left before 1975!

– Trevor Newton, ex CCEA(O), Great Doddington, Northampton

...I JOINED at HMS St Vincent on January 4 1955 at the age of 15 years and 55 days.

I was born on October 21 1939 and served 32 years.

Sorry, Bill, I've outdone you! Chief Ops Pete Cleaver (Ret'd)

...I WAS 15 years old on January 17 1955 and I joined HMS Ganges on February 8, making me 15 years and 22 days old. I don't think I was even the youngest in our class.

– Tony Watson, Macclesfield, Cheshire

...I'M SURE there will be many who can 'black cat' my early days in the RN but here's my two pennyworth on the subject.

I was born on July 17 1952, joined HMS Ganges aged 15 years and 29 days, joined HMS Vernon aged 16 on my birthday, and joined HMS Scarborough aged 16 years and 97 days.

– Reg Farmer, Intake, Doncaster

...THE BROTHERS Hagger were ancient enough to myself.

I took the King's Shilling at Charing Cross recruiting office on February 4 1952, and joined HMS St Vincent the same day, which was 58 days after my 15th birthday.

I'm sure there are many other ex naval boys who have similar stories.

– Sandy Sadler, ex Chief TASI.

...I CAN beat the Haggars by 100 days.

I was born January 4 1943 and joined up at HMS Ganges on January 7 1958, making me 15 years and three days.

– Brian Harrington, Bridlington, East Yorks

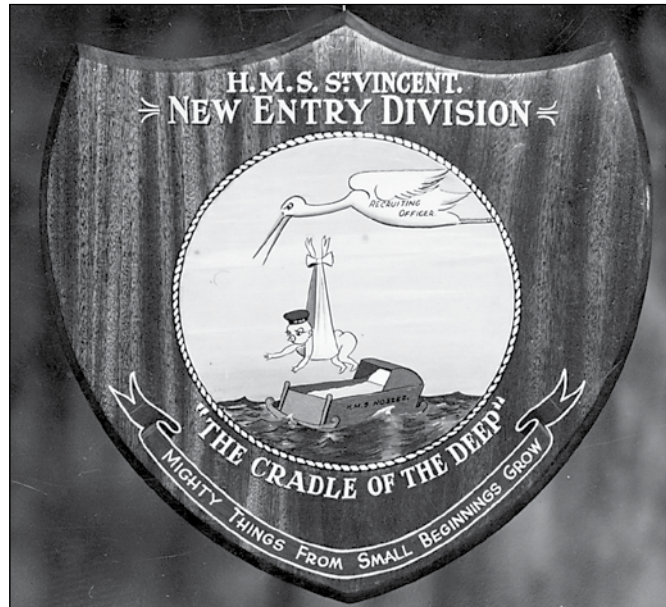
...MY DATE of birth is April 18 1940 and I joined HMS Ganges on May 3 1955 (Class 292, Telegraphist) at 15 years and 16 days.

– Henry 'Ron' Barrett, ex RS(I), Chairman, Balliol Boys' Club Association, Woodstock, Oxfordshire

...AFTER reporting to the Manchester Recruiting Office on September 5 1960 I arrived at HMS St Vincent on the sixth. This was 72 days after my 15th birthday.

I'm sure there would have been many 'boys' who joined 34 Entry on that day that came well under the 15 years and 103 days' mark!

So, Bill, I'm afraid that you and



your twin, although a rare pair, are not unusual in your early start in the Andrew.

I served 17 years, leaving as a POREL in 1978. Many of my entry shipmates went on to serve many more years, finishing higher up the ladder.

Also in December's letters, Andy Christie wrote about his family service in the RN.

In addition to my mere 17 years, my older brother served 25 years.

The Pryor family tradition of serving the Crown and Country goes way back into the 19th century with my great-grandfather serving in the Sheffield City Police (22 years) my grandfather in the King's Own Light Infantry in the Boer War and WW1 (22 years in total) my father in the same Regiment for 22 years (including WW2) being wounded in Italy in 1943.

Today my nephew still serves in the West Yorkshire Police (over 22 years). A total around 130 years to date.

There are probably many families with similar service records and as proud as we are.

Once having served and following a family tradition it lives with you all through life!

We are a fortunate country that so many young men and women are still willing to put their lives on the line for justice.

– Rodger Prior, Wakefield

...I JOINED at HMS Ganges on May 4 1954 at the age of 15 years and 58 days. I was in Hawke Division and the instructor was PO Telegraphist Paul.

I was a Boy Telegraphist, and after Ganges served on the America and West Indies Station, Coastal Forces, Submarine Service, and Mediterranean Fleet, Northern Ireland and Far East Fleet (during the 'confrontation' with Indonesia) I left the Navy in 1965.

– John Hartley, Lytham-St-Annes, Lancashire

...BILL HAGGER and his twin were not even the youngest recruits in 14 Entry that joined St Vincent in June 1958, in fact they weren't even the youngest in their New Entry class, Fisher Class.

I was in that class with them, and I was born April 27 1943, which would make me 15 years 44 days on joining, some 59 days younger than the Hagger twins.

I'm sure there must have been others that were younger.

– Mike Ball, Havant, Hampshire

...FAR be it from me to rain on a naval officer's parade, but I'm afraid Lt Cdr Bill Hagger was not the youngest recruit of 1958.

My date of birth is February 15 1943 and I joined as a Ganges entrant (13 recruitment, Collingwood 44 mess) on May 6 1958, aged 15 years and 80 days.

Vital statistics, four foot 11 inches and seven stone six lbs. I was taken on the assumption that I would grow, given time and naval exercise, I did!

I eventually completed 25 very eventful and enjoyable (mostly) years, finally leaving in 1983, after which I spent 28 years in the oil industry, finally retiring from fulltime offshore work at the age of 68.

I can honestly say I have enjoyed every year of my working life and will always credit my work ethic to the values instilled into me by the finest Navy in the world.

– Peter 'Scouse' Toms, ex CMEM, Liff Village, Dundee, Tayside

...I WAS 15 years and 62 days when I joined at Ganges but my old shipmate Colin Newsham was only 15 years and 29 days when we joined.

– J Gwynfor Jones, Blaenau Ffestiniog

...I WAS born on April 1 1947, left

school on April 13 1962 and joined the Royal Navy on May 7 1962.

I was 15 years, 37 days old on joining HMS St Vincent 49 Entry.

– Mick Liddiard, ex LREM, Swindon, Wilts

...My date of birth is November 23 1938 and I joined St Vincent on January 5 1954.

This made me 15 years and 43 days old.

I was certainly the youngest boy in our class, Duncan 69, but maybe there is someone out there that joined at an earlier age.

– Owen Curtis, ex-Able Seaman (UC 2), Swindon, Wilts

...I WAS 15 years old on April 3 1956, I joined HMS Ganges on April 30 1956, 15 years and 27 days old.

I believe we were the first class of Junior Engineering and Junior Naval Air Mechanics. I was made a Leading Junior.

Was I the first Leading Junior Engineering Mechanic in the Royal Navy?

Come on all you Leading Junior Eng Mech – who can beat that?

– Joe Rourke, Stretford, Manchester

...MY date of birth is April 24 1942 and I joined St Vincent on May 7 1957, thus making me 15 years and 15 days old.

I still remember, as I entered the gates of St Vincent, the sight of the mast being rigged for dress ship, for Commonwealth Day, (and not me) as I found out later!

– Derek Whittaker, POMW Ret'd, Cosham, Hants

...I CAN beat Bill Hagger's claim by nine days, as my date of birth is November 6 1949 and I joined Ganges on February 8 1965, giving me an age of 15 years, 94 days.

My oppo Graeme Coutts, ex LRO(G) joined at the same time, both of us from the Aberdeen area, and his age was 15 years, 58 days.

– Tom Moultrie, Exmouth, Devon

...MY BIRTHDAY is July 16 and I joined at HMS St Vincent on September 6 1960. I was 15 years and 51 days old. I was led to believe I was the youngest boy out of entry of over 100.

No doubt someone will put me right on this.

I don't claim to be the youngest to join the RN in the modern era, but I was certainly younger than Bill Hagger and his twin.

– George Wise, ex POMEM(L) Chatham, Kent

...SORRY Bill, but my date of birth is December 4 1939 and I joined the RN on November 10 1954, so I was 14 years, 11 months and six days old.

After HMS Ganges training I joined HMS Diamond and in January or February 1956 went out to the Med for nine months, or so we thought.

President Nasser had other ideas for keeping us out there longer with the Suez crisis.

With this all taking place on the November 6 1956,

I was still a boy seaman and still only 16 years old, so does that make me the youngest boy seaman to serve in a conflict?

I am sure Navy News readers will let me know otherwise!

– Mike Smith, Marshland Maritime Museum, Clenchwarton, King's Lynn

E W PORTER'S letter (January) brought back some memories. I joined the Andrew in July 1943, My first draft was to HMS Bristol for eight weeks physical training to bring me up to A1 condition.

Bristol was a stone frigate, known in peace time as Muller's Orphanage. The Navy requisitioned part of it for this specific purpose. We used the ablutions provided for the peacetime habitans.

Attached to the washroom we found a drying room equipped with numerous wooden racks. We also found a cupboard with some drawers containing white powder. This proved to be bleach.

We had already observed that most of the ship's company wore collars that were light blue, obviously reflecting some service time.

Ours were dark blue, which marked us out as rookies. The answer was easy. Wash your collars in bleach. Fill the sink with hot water, immerse the collar and sprinkle in the powder. Wrong, add the powder to the water, stir vigorously and then immerse the collar.

Should you do the former the bleach would act on some parts of the collar but not others. Result, a collar of patches of dark blue, various shades of lighter blue and some pure white.

Totally unwearable. Fortunately one could buy another from Slops, if you had the ackers. I was always fascinated by Jack's desire to get away with wearing something not conforming to regulations.

Example, cap bow, tied at the front, not over the ear, not wearing the lanyard, cap worn 'flat aback,' wearing shoes not issue boots, sewing an extra piece of serge in the bottom of the trousers to widen them, wearing a raincoat instead of the issue overcoat.

I suppose it was our way of maintaining a spirit of independence.

Does anyone know whether the other branches of the Services were as keen to do the same thing?

Stan Taylor, ex Coder 1943-1946, Falcon Inn, Willenhall, Wolverhampton

## Boys honoured, thanks to Jim

I WAS very pleased to see in January's edition the article about the dedication and unveiling ceremony of the stone to honour the 534 Boys killed in action during World War 2.

As the article said, this ceremony will take place on Sunday March 18, 2012, at Portsmouth Cathedral.

On that day, it's hoped that 12 ex-Ganges and St Vincent boys from Thanet will take a mini coach to Portsmouth to attend the service.

Again, it is hoped, we are taking four standards with us. These will be the three local RNA standards, Birchington, Ramsgate and Margate, plus the standard of HMS Phoebe Association which I will be carrying.

HMS Phoebe lost three boys during WW2 in two separate actions. I was a Boy Seaman on Phoebe during her 1946-8 commission in the Med.

I hope there will be many more ex-Boy Seamen attending on the day, and I would like to congratulate Jim Reed on the success of his project; he has worked hard to bring it to fruition.

– Derek West, HMS Phoebe Association, Minster, Ramsgate, Kent



● This photo was undated in our Ganges archive, but probably dates from about 1971. However, the players are identified and the caption reads as follows (as far as I could make out the faded pencil) 16 Mess, Drake: JRO John Heaton, JEM Derek Hollies, Maurice Hogden, JEM David Allen, J Stwd Martin Newsome, J Asst Ck Ian Haidon – Ed



## Royal award for Vigilant crew

THE good men of HMS Vigilant have been royally recognised for working hard for their favourite charity over the last 12 months.

Last summer, seven men from the boat cycled 550 miles from their base in Devonport to Clyde in a ride organised by PO Mick Hughes.

Following that marathon effort, Vigilant won the 2011 prize awarded by the RNRMC to the unit which gets the most people to sign up to the payroll giving scheme.

Mick Hughes was with his Commanding Officer, Cdr Mark Lister, to pick up the certificate and prize of £1,000 from the charity presented by the Princess Royal at a ceremony in Portsmouth.

Mick said: "The cycle ride was hard work but it was worth it and donating straight from your pay makes sense."

Cdr Lister said: "I'm proud of my crew for the work they do on board Vigilant and I am proud of them for the charity work they put in as well – they are a fine bunch."

Meanwhile, the officers and men of HMS Vengeance have not been idle on the charity front – they raised £500 for the Fishermen's Mission and got a good laugh into the bargain.

While the submarine was deployed and no-one outside the boat could see the results, the crew indulged in some bizarre haircuts.

The most extreme was LET (WESM) Harry Harrison, who had most of his hair shaved off, including his eyebrows and treasured beard, by the Commanding Officer, Cdr Paul Blythe.

With a long period under the waves, Harry and his follicly-challenged colleagues are hoping everything will grow back before they return to Faslane and public view.

## Plymouth RNRMC show

JIM Davidson, Jethro, Bobby Davro, Rick Wakeman and Claire Sweeney will be joined by The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines for a charity fundraising show to raise funds for the RNRMC at the Plymouth Pavilions on February 16.

The variety show will run for approximately three hours, with Jim, Jethro, Bobby and Rick each performing a solo set, whilst Claire will be singing with the Royal Marines Swing Band.

To buy tickets call the Box Office on 0845 146 1460 or log onto [www.plymouthpavilions.com](http://www.plymouthpavilions.com).

## Santa's bridge

A MILITARY-themed Santa's grotto at the Bridge for Heroes charity headquarters in King's Lynn, Norfolk, proved popular over the Christmas period, with an estimated 5,000 visitors.

Mike Taylor, founder of the charity, which helps tackle post-traumatic stress, said: "The response was unbelievable and we'll definitely be doing it again next year."

"Children were able to meet Father Christmas, have a chocolate medal and a piece of fruit, and we also identified 50 beneficiaries through doing this, which is a brilliant bonus."

# Phone keeps Harriet in the loop

A SERIOUSLY-ill teenage girl, Harriet Bond – the daughter of submariner Lt Ian Bond – has received a life-changing Christmas gift thanks mainly to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund and Naval welfare support service.

Harriet, aged 13, has been given a special text-based mobile phone to allow her to communicate more regularly with friends and family.

Until now Harriet has been loaned a similar phone – called a Lightwriter Connect and costing almost £5,000 – during her daytime attendance at the Lavinia Norfolk Centre in Angmering, a centre for young children with physical, mental, medical and sensory difficulties.

But having her own, upgraded model – which has been funded by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund charity and two local Rotary clubs – will open up her world 24 hours a day.

She will be able to stay in touch with her group of close friends plus when necessary have phone conversations with mum Sarah, dad Ian and 19-year-old brother Henry.

She became seriously ill in 2006 with a rare neurological condition Acute Disseminated Encephalomyelitis (ADEM).

She suffered another episode of the illness in 2009 which left her with severe mobility, speech and feeding difficulties, although her intellectual capabilities remain intact.

Harriet's family has been supported throughout her illness



● Harriet Bond, daughter of Lt Ian Bond, has been helped by the RNRMC Children's Fund  
Picture: LA(Phot) Jason Ballard

by the Naval Personal and Family Service and Royal Marines Welfare which offers a comprehensive social work service to RN personnel and their families.

They played a big part, securing the funds to ensure Harriet receives the £4,585 Lightwriter in time for Christmas.

Two special mounts to allow the Lightwriter to be fitted to Harriet's two wheelchairs were provided by the Snowdrop charity.

Harriet's submariner father, Lt Bond, said: "Harriet's illness has been devastating to our family; she is such a lovely, full-of-life girl who always has

a smile on her face.

"Her first episode of ADEM saw her make a very good recovery in a short space of time. However this time around her improvements have been a lot slower. We all remain positive that her recovery will continue to improve."

"The level of support she has received has been extremely uplifting."

"This new Lightwriter will enable her to socialise with her new friends she is making at Lavinia Norfolk Centre."

"Thank you just doesn't sound enough but we are all very grateful to all who have helped her."

## Rachel's on top of the world



THERE was a very personal reason for Cdr Rachel Scandling to join the 'Women v Cancer' 400km cycle ride through Kenya.

The ride involved a group of 70 women cycling through the Kenyan Rift Valley from the slopes of Mount Kenya to the shores of Lake Victoria to raise funds for breast, cervical and ovarian cancer charities in the UK.

Rachel, who works for the Deputy Commander-Chief Fleet, in Portsmouth, explained: "My family, like many families today, have been affected by cancer."

"For the last three generations, no female member of my family has survived beyond the age of 55, and all have died of female-related cancers."

She added: "The vast majority of women who took part in this cycle ride were not London 2012 candidates, professional athletes or even everyday cyclists."

"Instead, they were women like me, who've had their lives touched by cancer."

The journey, which was staggered over five days last November, raised more than £300,000 in support of three charities, with £45,000 going directly to Kenya's Cancer Support Centre in Faraja.

Rachel said: "I could cycle to an 'ok' standard but I'd never cycled huge distances over consecutive days. I wish I'd known how big the hills were before I started!"

"The most challenging day was Day Three, which consisted of crossing the Kerio Valley and climbing the Elgeyo escarpment from Kabarnet to Eldoret."

"There was a huge sense of

achievement when we reached the top of the mountain and were rewarded with fantastic views across the Rift Valley."

To date, Rachel has already raised more than £4,000 through Action for Charity – to donate, go to [www.justgiving.com/Rachel-Scandling](http://www.justgiving.com/Rachel-Scandling)



● RNBT's Jack conceals the full glory of Lt Kerry Packer's mankini as he prepares for a New Year's day dip into the diving lake at Horsea Island

## Bracing start to the new year with RNBT

WHAT better way to recover from the New Year's Eve festivities than to take a plunge into Horsea Lake on New Year's Day?

That's exactly what Lt Kerry Packer, LPT Pete Sapey, his dad Trevor, brother Martin and shipmate Sid Street did all in support of raising funds for the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust.

Lt Kerry Packer in typical PTI fashion donned the latest in swimwear, a 'mankini' – a striking garment particularly associated with Sacha Baron Cohen's creation Borat.

Kerry said: "I didn't think it would be that cold as it has been quite mild but believe me it was!"

However, being a PTI through and through he went on to say: "Let's make this an annual event!"

This fundraising, and 'fun', opportunity raised more than £200 for the charity.

The RNBT helps those who are serving or have served as Warrant Officers and below in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines (and their dependants) who have fallen on hard times.

If you want to find out more about the RNBT, go online at [www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk) or call 02392 690112.

■ The RNBT is looking for new trustees for its governing body. As befits the charity's dedication to ratings, the majority of its trustees (11 of 17) are either serving or retired Royal Navy ratings or Royal Marines other ranks.

Five vacancies will become available from April for Ordinary Member Trustee positions. Elections will take place at the start of March.

If you would be interested in volunteering to become a trustee, please contact the RNBT.



## RNBT TRUSTEES WANTED



The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) was formed under Royal Charter in 1922 to provide for those who are serving or have served as Warrant Officers and below, and their dependants, who find themselves in need or distress. The Trust's beneficiaries are referred to as The RNBT Family. Every year, more than 4,000 applicants are assisted, for further details go online: [www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)

A founding principle of the Trust is that it is predominantly run by serving and retired Sailors and Royal Marines. Accordingly 11 of the 17 trustees (including the Trust's Vice President) that form the RNBT's governing body are drawn from serving and retired RN ratings and RM other ranks and are known as Ordinary Member Trustees.

Vacancies will occur for 5 Ordinary Member Trustee positions with effect from 1 April 2012 as part of the RNBT's routine governance 'refreshment' programme.

The election of volunteers to fill these positions, including those who are standing down but may wish to stand for re-election, will happen in the first week of March.

Are you interested; can you contribute; do you want to find out more?

If so contact the RNBT's Portsmouth based Head Office on 02392 690112 or apply on-line for an Application Pack to: [rnbt@rnbt.org.uk](mailto:rnbt@rnbt.org.uk)





● Press officer Melissa Gerbaldi lays a white rose at the Scott statue in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

## Tribute is paid to explorer

A CENTURY to the day that Capt Robert Scott's party reached the South Pole a ceremony was held to mark the occasion in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Scott and his team sacrificed their lives in the pursuit of discovery and science, and despite the waxing and waning of his reputation over the decades the Naval officer is seen by many to embody the best of the human spirit.

At midday on January 17 the Friends of Porter's Garden laid a remembrance wreath at the Scott statue, close to the Porter's Lodge.

A prayer was read by Peter Goodship, Chief Executive of the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust.

And the ceremony concluded with the laying of a single white rose by Melissa Gerbaldi, press officer for Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and the British Services Antarctic Expedition, on whose behalf the rose was placed.

■ Expedition latest – p10

## Measuring up

A NAVAL technician has been awarded a Joint Force Support (Afghanistan) Commendation in recognition for his outstanding support to the Intelligence Exploitation Force during an operational tour in the Nahr-e Saraj area of the country.

AET Wyn Russell Byers Davies worked as a biometric support advisor, responsible for providing support and advice on all aspects of biometrics collection operations in the fight against insurgents.



● The intrepid group of climbers with the flag which they flew at the top of A'Chailleach in Scotland

## New Year challenge

A GROUP of serving and ex-RN personnel spent the New Year at a little-known hidden gem in the Highlands of Scotland – Pine Cottage at Newtonmore, a CAF facility provided by HMS Neptune.

WO1 MEM(SM) Gary Nicolson and WO1 MASM Hugh Welsh, of COMFASFLT, accompanied by an ex-RN contingent of WO1 Glen Bridgeman, CPO Wiggy Bennett, CPO Windy Gale, CPO Barney Barmby and RO Barbra James, climbed A'Chailleach (930 metres), which is just north of

Newtonmore on December 30. And as they were there they decided to fly the flag for the RN (which they just happened to have with them) in the spirit of 'Once Navy, always Navy.'

Could it also be the first time three holders of the Meritorious Service Medal have climbed this mountain on the same day as well?

The three MSM holders were Gary Nicolson, Glen Bridgeman and Martin Barmby, now Lt (CCF) Barmby RNR, the OIC of the RN section at Bridlington School CCF.

# Blue Light shows the way

THEY may not sound like a team at the cutting edge of community relations, but the Blue Light Disco group have scooped an award for their efforts.

The joint initiative between the Ministry of Defence Police, Royal Navy Police and Strathclyde Police has built a rapport with Helensburgh youngsters by holding regular discos in Churchill Square's Drumfork Centre.

And the team's hard work and dedication was recognised at the highest level within the Ministry of Defence with the presentation of a MOD People Award.

The awards celebrate and reward the

contributions of members of the MOD who, often selflessly, improve and inspire others – simply put, those that make a difference.

The Blue Light Team received their award in the "Community Involvement" category.

The team was represented by MDP's Sgt George Smart and Constable Russell White at an awards ceremony at MOD Main Building in London.

Sgt Smart, who was the originator of the initiative, said: "The MOD Police, our partner agencies and dedicated volunteers have strived to make the Blue Light Discos a great success."

"It is really great that the hard work of the

team has been recognised by the MOD.

"The disco regularly attracts around 240 young people from the local area."

"It has broken down barriers and provides a safe environment for our youngsters to enjoy themselves."

Beginning in 2008, the Blue Light initiative has been a huge success – figures show that it has helped significantly decrease instances of anti-social behaviour in the local area.

Secondary school age youngsters are breathalysed and searched on entry and get to meet community police officers and others who can provide them with support and advice.



## Bowing out after 50 years

A ROYAL Naval officer has finally retired after almost 50 years of service.

Lt Peter Durrant (pictured above), of Plymouth, joined the Senior Service in March 1962 as a 15-year-old sonar rating and served in numerous ships throughout the world.

He served the Royal Navy for 35 years before leaving in 1996 to take up a position as a Retired Officer (RO), working for the recovery cell, where he served for a further 14 years.

He ended his career at Devonport Naval Base after setting up Seymour Division, which is now recognised as the official recovery cell for sailors needing extra care and attention.

Peter left HMS Drake on December 9 – the day before his 65th birthday and after more than 49 years in a naval uniform.

Professional opportunities were almost boundless – in his case a boy from a country background was guided from being a junior seaman (torpedo and anti-submarine), through electrician and on to radio/radar/sonar and computers.

As a rating, Peter held ten substantive rates between Junior Seaman and CPO before taking up a commission.

His worldwide service included HM ships Ajax, Eagle, Plymouth, Galatea, Charybdis, Olympus, Opportune, Beagle, Bulldog, Fox and Fawn, and shore bases in Gibraltar and Mauritius, as well as HM ships Orion, Collingwood and Dolphin, and Greenwich, in the UK.

He was involved in the conflicts in Borneo/Indonesia from 1964 to 1965, and was one of the last full Foreign Service Commissions by RN personnel while serving in HMS Ajax.

## RN Police in key roles

THE major Naval Service input into operations in Afghanistan may have receded for now with 3 Commando Brigade having handed over the reins to Army units with the end of Herrick XIV last autumn.

But RN personnel continue to play important roles in the campaign, including members of the Royal Navy Police HQ (West).

LReg Murphy has been deployed on attachment as a shift commander within the UKTHF (Temporary Holding Facility) at Camp Bastion, having been handed the responsibility of ensuring the safety, welfare and treatment of all Taliban detainees awaiting transfer to the Afghan security forces.

The force recently welcomed RPO Boxall back home from theatre following a successful and eventful six-month deployment in Kandahar, playing a crucial role as the team manager within a four man Evidence Management Team, consisting of a forensic practitioner, an evidence manager and a weapons intelligence specialist.

His role in theatre, both as team manager and as an ambassador for the RNP, was taken over by LReg Scott Cantillon.



● Lt Cdr David 'Bing' Crosby gives the Earl and Countess of Wessex a guided tour of HMS Triumph in Bahrain

meet some of the crew and to see first hand how an auxiliary differs from a Royal Navy vessel.

Chief Officer Chris Mackenzie RFA said: "To have our Commodore-in-Chief aboard Diligence is a rare privilege."

"The ship's company has worked very hard preparing for the visit and I know that they have all been looking forward to the day since it was confirmed."

Whilst touring Triumph the Countess managed to get some 'hands-on' tuition in the use of the submarine's periscope and also

took great interest in the welfare of the families of those deployed away from home over Christmas.

Families of some of Triumph's personnel had joined their loved ones for the festive period and during a tour of the missile compartment, Lt Cdr David 'Bing' Crosby, Triumph's Executive Officer, explained how his children were worried that their Christmas presents wouldn't get delivered to Bahrain.

He said: "I've told them to leave a note for Santa with their address here; I'm sure he'll find a way to

deliver them."

The British Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Iain Lindsay, hosted a reception for the royal couple, attended by Bahraini officials, Servicemen and women based in Bahrain and local expatriates.

The Ambassador spoke of his admiration of the work the Armed Forces do in the Middle East and took the opportunity to present awards to Naval and RAF staff from UKMCC in recognition of their security and force protection duties.

## Back to square one

A NAVAL officer is back in new recruits' training – but this time he is in charge.

Lt Cdr David Cunningham began his own career when he walked through the gates of HMS Raleigh in 1983.

His new appointment sees him at the head of the school which turns raw recruits into Royal Navy ratings during an intensive ten-week course known as Initial Naval Training.

Lt Cdr Cunningham joined up as an artificer apprentice and qualified as a marine engineer artificer three years later.

He volunteered for the Submarine Service in 1986 and served in three boats and ashore at Devonport before joining the Officer Corps, eventually serving as MEO in HMS Tireless on her recent marathon deployment east of Suez.

He is one of two men still serving in the Royal Navy to have qualified to operate four generations of Naval nuclear reactors.



● Portsmouth Naval Base Commander Cdre Tony Radakin appropriately wields a pair of scissors at the Mop Docs barber shop to officially open the Pankhurst Paintings gallery. Barber Julia (holding ribbon) started taking commissions for pet and people portraits at the end of 2010, and as she was working in a naval base, ships past and present seemed an obvious development, starting with Ark Royal a year ago. Her shop walls gradually filled with paintings and prints for sale – see [www.pankhurstpaintings.co.uk](http://www.pankhurstpaintings.co.uk) for more details. Various prints of the Ark, signed by her last serving Captain, Capt Jerry Kyd, are available on Julia's eBay shop Pankhurst Paintings, where she will also be auctioning off some of her originals on April 1 – contact her through the website. Also pictured at the opening is Capt Mike Beardall (centre), who heads the Royal Navy's Fleet media operation



# Severn welcomes sponsor

THE ship's sponsor of fishery protection vessel HMS Severn has visited her ship in Cardiff.

Severn had just completed her first patrol of the new year and was in the Welsh capital for an operational stand-down period.

One of the first visitors welcomed on board was Prof Felicity Guild and her husband, Rear Admiral Nigel Guild, who presented awards to two members of the ship's company.

The first went to the ship's Marine Engineer Officer, WO1ET(ME) David Pooley, who was presented with an award from the Institute of Engineering in recognition of his vast knowledge and experience in engineering after more than 30 years of service in the Royal Navy, and for his invaluable contribution as Severn's MEO over the past 12 months.

The second went to POET(ME) Mark 'Roy' Hattersley, who was presented with his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in recognition of his outstanding service since joining the Royal Navy in 1996.

As well as proving himself to be a valuable and highly-competent engineer, shipmates regard Roy as being cheerful and a constant source of good morale on board.

After receiving their awards WO1 Pooley and PO Hattersley and their families had lunch with Severn's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Marcus Hember, and the ship's guests of honour.

Rear Admiral Guild was Controller of the Navy between 2000 and 2003 and Chief Naval Engineer Officer 2004-09.

# Buddhist initiative wins MOD acclaim

AS the MOD celebrated inclusivity in its ranks, a Naval officer won an award for his support of Buddhists in the Armed Forces.

Welcoming the shortlisted and invited guests to Main Building in London prior to the third MOD People Awards, Permanent Under Secretary and MOD Diversity Champion Ursula Brennan said: "The spirit of the People Awards is to celebrate those who have helped make the MOD a more inclusive, welcoming and supportive workplace."

Paul Jenkins QC, the Civil Service Diversity Champion, presented the awards, and said: "As the Civil Service Diversity Champion I take a strong personal interest in diversity and inclusion across all Government departments, and I am proud that these examples of best practice are occurring within the MOD."

Guest speaker Ben Summerskill, Chief Executive of lesbian, gay and bisexual equality organisation Stonewall, said: "It's often easy to forget that it was only a little over a decade ago that gay personnel could be legally dismissed from the military."

"Since the landmark change in the law the MOD has worked with all the armed services to ensure all personnel – right across the United Kingdom – are treated with dignity and respect."

There were four award

categories: Inclusivity, Inspiration, Leadership and Community Involvement, and Lt Richie Moss won the Inclusivity Award for being instrumental in the vision of and taking a leading role in setting up the Armed Forces Buddhist Society in late 2007.

He was nominated as, and remains, the first chairman of the Armed Forces Buddhist Society (AFBS).

What particularly impressed the judges was the inclusive manner in which he approached this task, and whilst it would have been easier to think dark blue and concentrate on the Naval Service, he focused on engaging with as broad a cross-section of the Armed Forces and Civil Service as possible.

Exploiting professional knowledge of social media, Lt Moss created a portal to enable Buddhists in the Forces and those from the supporting UK Buddhist community to link up, support each other and share information.

This has proved to be a valuable tool, particularly for those deployed overseas where no military chaplaincy support for Buddhists is provided.

This balanced, open approach was recognised and he has become pivotal in a number of military and civilian Buddhist bodies.

Richie said: "I'm very grateful to have won this award for work that has enabled me to create more awareness across the military and civilian communities of Buddhism



● Buddhist Chaplain to the MOD, Dr Sunil Kariyakarawana, and MOD People award-winner Lt Richie Moss

Picture: Harland Quarrington (MOD)

within the Armed Forces.

"This will enable me to continue to help bring people together from a wide and diverse background to facilitate spiritual and faith development, particularly at the Armed Forces Buddhist Conference which will take place at Amport House from June 6-8."

In December Lt Moss and the Buddhist Chaplain to the MOD, Dr Sunil Kariyakarawana, were invited by the Indian government to address the Global Buddhist Congregation, New Delhi, to bring awareness of Buddhism in the UK military to an audience of over 800 highly-respected

Buddhist monks and scholars from around the world.

Anyone interested in finding out about Buddhism in the military or this year's conference should contact Dr Kariyakarawana on 94631 3411 or 020 7414 3411.

For information on the AFBS contact Lt Moss on 9380 24162.

Details about the conference – open to anyone who wishes to find out about this unique religion where a belief in a creator god is not required – are contained in DIN 2011DIN01-229: Armed Forces Buddhist (Spiritual and Moral Leadership) Conference 6-8 Jun 12.



# Going home

A SAILOR has been given the opportunity to help youngster from her home town through a national charity.

LS (AW) Natalie Hopkins (above) is on a nine-month secondment from her normal day job to work with the Prince's Trust in the Welsh town of Ammanford.

Natalie will be leading groups of disadvantaged young people from the town and surrounding areas.

Joining the Navy in June 2002 Natalie has served in HMS St Albans from 2002-06 in the ship's Gulf and Baltic deployments.

Highlights included meeting the Prince of Wales – who set up the Prince's Trust in 1976 – in St Petersburg, and helping to evacuate British citizens from Beirut in 2006.

She also served on HMS Westminster's Gulf and Far East deployments between 2006 and 2011.

Natalie said: "I'm really excited after nearly ten years away to be going home and giving something back to my local area."

"It feels daunting to be returning to help the young people in that and the surrounding areas get back to work. I expect it to be a challenge and I'm looking forward to proving myself in this new role."

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## 'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

# Truculent sinking is recalled

A MEMORIAL service has been held for those who died in HMS Truculent in 1950.

The Medway Towns branch of the Submariners Association organised the service at the St George's Centre in Chatham on the nearest Saturday to January 12, the anniversary of the sinking.

A total of 64 Naval and dockyard personnel were lost in the collision, and the service also remembers the five crew members of an Avro Lancaster from RAF Coastal Command at RAF Kinloss who were lost while taking part in the rescue operation.

More than 220 people attended the service, with 27 standards representing the Submariners Association, RNA branches, the Merchant Navy, the Royal British Legion, Sea Cadets, the Royal Air Force Association and Royal Naval Reserve – too many standard bearers to gather at the front of the church as normal, so one half stayed put and the others stood by the Truculent memorial plaque.

The Sea Cadets, as always, did a grand job in manning the entrance door, car parking and assisting visitors.

Guests of honour were the Mayor of Medway, Cllr Ted Baker, and his wife Sylvia.

The service was conducted by Revs Alan Boxall and Gordon Warren RN, with the latter delivering a poignant sermon.

And the congregation were fortunate to have an organist who played at the tempo Navy types like to sing, so every hymn was sung with gusto and in time.

The Act of Remembrance was read by Medway Towns branch member S/M Bill Vowden, and a faultless *Last Post* sounded by Royal Engineers bandsman, Scott.

One of the wreath-layers during proceedings was Fred Henley, who survived the incident.

On completion, and after a tot or two of rum, an impressive buffet was provided by the ladies of the branch and chef David Scott, a member of the branch, and his serving submariner son (and fellow branch member) Simon.

HMS Truculent sank following a collision with the Swedish tanker Divina in the Thames estuary – a collision which arose because of confusion over navigation lights.

Most of the crew (and 18 Chatham dockyard workers on board undertaking post-refit work) escaped the stricken submarine but without rescuers on hand they were carried away by the river and died in the freezing water or on exposed mud banks.

## Cornwell plea

WILL Steel, of Real Life Media, is making a short film for BBC2 about Jack Cornwell VC and would like to speak to someone who had a relation who fought in the Battle of Jutland.

Ideally the person would have spoken to the family member about the battle, in which Jack won his Victoria Cross.

If you fit the bill, you can contact Will at [Will@reallife.co.uk](mailto:Will@reallife.co.uk)

# Squadron forms link with Legion

THE Royal British Legion's Bruton branch and 815 Naval Air Squadron have marked a new affiliation with the mutual exchange of gifts.

Cdr Louis Wilson-Chalon, Commanding Officer of 815 NAS, said he was "delighted to forge close links between the Bruton branch of the Royal British Legion and 815 Naval Air Squadron, and to recognise the important and worthwhile work that the Legion does in supporting serving and former members of the Armed Services."

The delegates from Bruton brought with them a unique First Day Cover of the Battle of Taranto, the first of 815 Squadron's honours – a gift of which they made to the aviators as a token of the event (pictured right).

Having hosted delegates from the Legion on Remembrance Day at the Squadron's headquarters in Yeovilton, Cdr Wilson-Chalon, Lt Cdr Richardson – the squadron's Senior Pilot – and affiliation officer Lt Weston attended and took part in Bruton's own Remembrance parade the following Sunday.



# Riyadh branch helps Cowes lifeboat fund

MEMBERS might live hundreds of miles from the nearest coast, but it didn't stop Riyadh branch thinking of those in peril on the sea.

Shipmates in the Saudi capital and surrounding areas have helped contribute towards the cost of a new lifeboat station back in the UK.

And while making a short visit to Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, Andrew Cabbage – the business development manager of BAE in Saudi Arabia – delighted local RNLI lifeboat station manager Mark Southwell by presenting him with a cheque for £1,000.

The money, he explained, had been raised by members of the Riyadh branch, which is the largest RNA branch outside the UK.

And it will be used to bolster the £1 million appeal for a new Cowes lifeboat station, proposed for the old Custom House beside The Parade.

RNLI sponsor and appeal manager Andy Whyte said that since the appeal was launched early in 2011 a total of £662,709 has been raised.

Cowes RNLI guild chairman Anna Morgan Crockett said she was even more hopeful that the full £1-million target could be reached in the coming months, as a result of the many other fund-raising initiatives in the pipeline.

Warm tribute was paid by the appeal's hon treasurer, Mark Wynter, to the long list of contributors. "I am stunned at the variety of sources the money has



● Cowes RNLI lifeboat station manager Mark Southwell (left) thanks S/M Andrew Cabbage for the Riyadh branch donation

come from," he said. "It amounts to so much human activity, both small and large."

The RNA presentation was made beside the Cowes lifeboat in Shepards Wharf Marina while S/M Andrew was taking a short break at his home in Cowes.

"When I worked for BAE at Cowes between 1988 and 2003 I regularly sailed from the port, and

appreciated the work of the local lifeboat," said Andrew.

"I still have a half-share in a motor launch based at Cowes Corinthian Sailing Club and a flat at Osborne Court on The Parade."

Meanwhile contractor Raymond Brown is making good progress in the construction of the boat slipway at the new station, with some help provided by local

diving firm, MMC. Isle of Wight company Imphouse has started work on converting the Custom House, and the whole project should be completed by the end of April.

For more information or to find out how you can support the Cowes Lifeboat Station Appeal, see [www.rnli.org.uk/cowesappeal](http://www.rnli.org.uk/cowesappeal)

# Crawley celebrate 60 years

CRAWLEY branch was commissioned 60 years ago when a group of ex-Naval and Merchant Seamen got together to set up the group.

The branch held an anniversary reception to mark this momentous achievement, the only regret being that none of the original founding members could attend – they have all crossed the bar in the intervening years.

S/M John Mortimer was the driving force behind the committee, and thanks are due to him for ensuring that the day was such a success.

S/M David Davis said: "Our aim was to embrace the other organisations in the town and we were pleased with the support received from the area Territorial Army, Sea Cadet training ship TS Cossack, the Lowfield Heath branch of the Royal British Legion and many others."

"The Mayor and his consort, the Deputy Mayor and his wife, the Leader of the Council, the MP for the area, the National Chairman of the RNA, S/M Chris Dovey and other shipmate committee members from No 3 Area – and even a shipmate from as far afield as Worcester – were made very welcome."

"The Mayor gave a speech of welcome which was followed by the branch chaplain, S/M Gordon Kitney, who thanked Madam Mayor for her speech and led all in a prayer of thanks for those present and for all the shipmates who had crossed the bar."

"The branch chairman, S/M Jack Woodhouse, then cut the anniversary cake with an Indian cavalry-vintage ceremonial sword which was nearly as big as him."

"Our secretary S/M Julie Hancock organised and presented a superb buffet meal and organised her Sea Cadets to make sure all were well-fed, and organised a very successful raffle."

"The Shepherd Neame Brewery and many local traders were generous with raffle prizes."

## Good show for dance

ATTENDANCE at the Plymouth annual dinner dance was up this year – 221 members and guests filed into the WO and SR Mess at HMS Drake for the premier event in the branch's calendar.

Occupying the top table were the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of the city, Cllr Peter and Brenda Brookshaw, Association General Secretary Capt Paul Quinn and his wife Liz, HMS Raleigh Training Commander Cdr John Twine and his wife Carolyn, and branch Chairman S/M Bob Palmer.

Following the Loyal Toast, an excellent meal and some inspirational speeches, the Chairman thanked Annette and her staff for superb service, the Sea Cadets for their customary immaculate turnout, Mess President WO Garry 'Scooby' Drew and his members for the use of the mess, Suzanne and her committee for another successful social event – and all present for their attendance.

The evening continued with dancing to the band Bubanga.

# Type 21 Club up and running

SAILORS who served in the Royal Navy's Type 21 frigates – the Porches of the Fleet – can now join a new association dedicated to their ships.

The Association has been formed to organise reunions and events, become a focal point for news and information, and act as a link to other related organisations.

As the Association develops, it is hoped that it will be able to offer support and other services to its members.

Two successful reunions have already been held in Plymouth, with guests coming from all over the UK, Canada, America,

Malaysia and Australia.

There have also been several smaller local reunions around the UK and in Australia organised by individual members.

Those who served on Type 21s can join online through [www.type21club.org.uk](http://www.type21club.org.uk)

Membership is free, and once enrolled there is also access to a dedicated social networking site for all members.

Associate membership is available to family members, staff of Yarrow and Vosper Thornycroft shipyards who built the ships, Royal Dockyard staff, and those in the Pakistani Navy who have an

association with the ships.

Eight Type 21 frigates entered service between 1970 and 1975, the result of a commercial design to plug a gap between the ageing wartime cohort of ships and the new generation of modern ships including the Type 22 frigate and Type 42 destroyer.

They were known for their distinctive sleek lines and turn of speed, earning them the soubriquets the Porches or greyhounds of the fleet.

They were the first class of Royal Navy ships to be powered by aero derived gas turbines and the crews' living conditions were a

substantial improvement on their predecessors.

All eight ships were always based in Devonport, providing a degree of continuity and certainty for sailors and their families, which built on the camaraderie of the Type 21 Club, a sense of community which developed during their build.

Seven of the eight Amazon-class ships served with distinction in the Falklands Campaign, though two – HM ships Ardent and Antelope – were lost.

The remaining six – HM ships Amazon, Ambuscade, Arrow, Active, Alacrity and Avenger – were decommissioned in 1994 and sold to the Pakistan Navy, in which they still serve today.

## Padre is special guest

WALTHAM Cross branch held their annual dinner at the Halsey Masonic Hall in Cheshunt.

Some 80 members and guests enjoyed an excellent meal, and were later entertained by the group Lover's Leap.

Special guests at the event were the branch's former padre, Rev Canon Martin Bannister, and his wife.

The Shipmate of the Year award went to Newark's new vice chairman, S/M Frank Higgins, who was unfortunately absent through work commitments.

Special awards were made to three shipmates, Peggy Hare, Marion Joy and Vera Everest, who have over the years raised large amounts towards branch funds.

Small gifts were also presented to members of the social committee for their dedication.







## Former enemies meet up

ALFRED Solomon was a wireless operator on a motor torpedo boat which was sunk by the Germans in the North Sea in March 1943.

Chilled to the bone, Alfred was plucked from the sea by a German ship, and he spent the duration as a prisoner of war.

Siegfried Huchthausen was a sailor in a German *Schnellboot* or E-boat who suffered a similar fate, and was picked up by a British warship (he still recalls the English breakfast he enjoyed on board).

Years after the war ended Alfred, a member of the **Coastal Forces Veterans Association**, met Siegfried at an annual reunion of a German naval association of E-boat crews – who welcomed their former foe with open arms.

They became firm friends and met many times in the subsequent decades, but now 89-year-old Alfred has made what he believes will be his final trip to Braunschweig (Brunswick).

He travelled alone by train from Croydon to Lower Saxony to see his 87-year-old friend to once more share their love of the sea, of German composers (and of coffee and cake...)

## Canberra closes

ON November 24 2011 members of **Canberra** branch in Australia voted unanimously to disband the branch as of December 31.

The branch was established in 1986.

A dedicated group of shipmates have run it over the years, but it has become increasingly difficult in recent times, and the branch was unable to recruit a new committee to carry on this year.

Branch chairman S/M Hugh Parker said: "As we drop anchor for the last time, all our members can be proud that they have upheld the proud traditions of the Royal Navy, and will continue to do so as we move into the future."

# Professor (ex-AB) talks to shipmates

THE 46th annual reunion of the **HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association** was held at the King Charles Hotel in Gillingham.

Members were entertained to an excellent speech by Prof Jerry Kirk, who joined the Royal Navy in 1942 and served in Ajax as an AB when the ship sailed to North Africa.

On returning to England, he obtained a commission and took part in Combined Operations as a Navigator before being appointed to Messina where he took command of a minesweeper.

This sweeper later became the *Calypso* – Jacques Cousteau's research ship which featured in many of his films.

On retirement Jerry specialised in medicine, and after an illustrious career he retired in 1989 as Honorary Consulting Surgeon at the Royal Free Hospital and Professor of Surgery at University College, London.

Members were also delighted to welcome Admiral Tubby Squires, who was captain of the frigate when the first official visit was paid to Ajax in Canada in 1976, on which occasion the Freedom of the City was presented to the ship.

Admiral Squires had served in the Royal Navy from 1946 until his retirement in 1983, after

## Veterans video

A NEW video has been released by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency to raise awareness of the help provided by the UK's Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) to anyone who has served in the Armed Forces – see [www.veterans-uk.info/social\\_media.html](http://www.veterans-uk.info/social_media.html)



● Shipmates from the cruiser HMS Ajax at the reunion – back row, from left, Jerry Kirk and John Hitchen; front row, Ken Jones, Mike Turner, Bill Slader, Dennis Talbot and Joe Collis

his appointment as Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The association is actively recruiting new members – for

further information please contact Mrs Judi Collis at [Malcolm.collis@gmail.com](mailto:Malcolm.collis@gmail.com) for details.

And the association is already

looking to the future – the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate falls on December 13 2014.

# Visited and visiting

WITH the dust having settled on their move to a new HQ in Semaphore Tower in Portsmouth Naval Base, the **Association of Wrens** thought it was high time they staged an open day for those who had either welcomed, or facilitated, the move.

Those attending included many representatives from Naval Base groups, headed by the Captain of the Base, Capt Jeremy Rigby, as well as Portsmouth Area Talking News, RN Property staff and RNA General Secretary S/M Paul Quinn and his HQ colleagues, WRNS Benevolent Trust officers and other RN charitable organisations.

Also most welcome were a group of seven senior and junior rates from Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless, who took advantage of their lunch break to call in on the Association, and were most interested in the archive and current material on display.

Further open days are planned which may coincide with joint AOW/RNA launch tours of the Harbour.

The AOW Carol Service at St Mary le Strand was held for the first time on a Saturday afternoon, a move which was rewarded with a good attendance.

The service was led by the Principal Anglican Chaplain and Archdeacon for the Royal Navy, the Ven Martin Poll.

Following the service AOW Vice President Janet Crabtree surprised



● Members of the Association of Wrens and their hosts in the wardroom of HMS Diamond, in front of the portrait of Commandant Mary Talbot, Director WRNS 1973-76

Picture: AB S Pape

Martin with a magnificent birthday cake, the congregation sang *Happy Birthday* and the church wardens served wine and mince pies.

A group of AOW members enjoyed a tour of destroyer HMS Diamond – and discovered a portrait of great significance displayed in the wardroom.

The picture was of Commandant Mary Talbot, the Director of WRNS 1973-76 who in 1974 instigated the MOD Study Group tasked to redefine the identity and purpose of the WRNS for the next ten years and beyond.

The recommendations then approved by the Admiralty included the statement that "career opportunities available to women had to be comparable with those offered by civilian jobs. In

other words, equally challenging and interesting", with the final note stating that Wrens should receive less pay due to having fewer disadvantages, such as not having to undertake sea service...

How times had changed as the visitors sat around the wardroom lunch table, hosted by Lt Cdr Pincher Martin, the only male amongst three female RN officers, a POET (ME) and six ratings.

The final report concluded that the service offered by the WRNS was still very much required, and recommended, amongst other things, that Wrens should be more widely employed, particularly through opening up new jobs, and training should be brought more in line with that of male personnel.

## Ganges Boys to gather

A GATHERING of former Ganges Boys has been arranged for the former Pontins holiday camp at Pakefield in Suffolk.

The **HMS Ganges (RNTE) Shotley Pakefield Gathering** will take place on June 22-25 at the holiday park, now part of the Britannia Hotels Group.

A major advantage in holding the reunion at Pakefield, beside the facilities and location, is the opportunity to visit the now-established HMS Ganges Museum, on the foreshore of the old training establishment.

Not much remains of the old buildings, and the infamous Ganges Mast needs some care and attention, according to former Boy Seaman S/M Bernie Corrie (Blake Division 1951).

"We all recall this mast as part of our being changed from boys into men in the curriculum of our training, and only have total respect for the memories," said S/M Corrie.

"It was obligatory having to climb as far as the 'button' as you could, but you were expected to make it to the upper yard anyway."

S/M Corrie added there were negotiations afoot to refurbish the mast and leave it *in situ*.

Contact S/M Robbie Robson for an application form at 12 Rainton Street, Old Penshaw, Houghton le Spring DH4 7HQ, tel 0191 584 7058.

## Commando RN dinner

AN INAUGURAL Royal Navy Commando dinner will take place in the Mountbatten Suite of the Royal Marines Museum in Southsea on Thursday March 29.

The dinner is for any individual who has completed commando training and subsequently been a serving member of the RN, including retired personnel and commando-trained individuals who transferred from other Services.

Dress for the dinner will be mess undress/1a, or black tie for civilian guests, and the cost is expected to be in the region of £30, dependent on sponsorship.

It is hoped that the guest speaker will be Rear Admiral Simon Goodall, ex-MOD Director General Training and Education.

Interested personnel are invited to contact CPO Irish Watson on 023 9254 2701.

## Royal weekend

THE latest adventure weekend courtesy the Royal Marines Association is **Operation Commando** – an action-packed programme organised by more than 30 serving and former Royals designed to give a taste of the Bootneck way of life.

Suitable for all fitness levels and abilities, Operation Commando will be held at the Bluestone National Park in Wales from March 2-4 and costs from £149 per person, plus a requested fundraising amount for the RMA of £200 per person.

[www.operationcommando.co.uk](http://www.operationcommando.co.uk) has more details.

# Patriotic boost at Pickle Night



● Members of Newark branch in 1805 costume for Pickle Night

THE sale of tickets and raffle tickets for **Newark** branch's Pickle Night, held at Staythorpe Club, raised £1,142 for Newark Patriotic Fund.

Guests, including the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Patriotic Fund, Patrick Mercer MP and Keith Girling, the Mayor and Mayoress of Newark and Cdr Eric Langley RN, heard the story of HMS Pickle's race to get the news of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar, but also his untimely death, to the Admiralty in London.

The story was told through readings by members of the RNA dressed in 1805 period dress.

The ceremony of Colours started the formal part of the evening and Sunset brought the evening to a close.

During the evening the Sea Cadets of TS Newark Castle spelt out Nelson's famous signal

using semaphore flags, each movement timed to correspond with appropriate nautical music.

Mr Mercer proposed the toast to the immortal memory of Lord Nelson and responded to a speech from branch secretary S/M Kevin Winter, who thanked all those local businesses and people who had donated prizes for the raffle or their time in order to raise money for this fund, which helps injured servicemen and their families locally.

Mr Girling spoke about how the fund came to be started and Mr Mercer praised the people of Newark for looking after their own injured servicemen.

The Newark Patriotic Fund is currently the only one of its type in the country, though Mr Mercer hopes that after briefing fellow MPs, other towns may follow Newark's example.

## £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our December edition (right) was HMS Berwick, which was sunk by HMS Tireless, and D Walker of Glasgow wins £50 for giving the correct answer.

This month's mystery ship, pictured above, changed from one class of ship to another – a touch of magic which seems quite appropriate, given her name.

She started life as a W-class destroyer, launched in the autumn of 1943, although the following year she was badly damaged by one of her own depth charges exploding on board.

She is pictured here in 1963, after her conversion in the early 1950s; she was broken up in the spring of 1967.

(1) What was her name, and (2) what was her type number after she was converted?

We have removed her pennant number from the image.



Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is March 9 2012. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our April edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

### MYSTERY PICTURE 204

Name .....

Address .....

My answers (1) .....

(2) .....



# Stonewall lauds Navy's stance

THE Royal Navy has been named in the UK's top 100 of 'gay-friendly' employers based on a major national survey.

More than 350 companies, whose workforces total more than 1.9 million people in all – one in every 15 people in employment in the land – took part in the survey by Stonewall, the UK charity which campaigns and lobbies on behalf of lesbian, gay and bisexual men and women.

The Naval Service has been one of Stonewall's 'diversity champions' for the past seven years and has taken part in the organisation's workplace survey since 2006. The RN was placed 179th in 2010 and 112th last year.

Global accountancy firm Ernst & Young topped the Stonewall list, with the Home Office, Barclays Bank and IBM all named in the top ten. The RAF was the highest-placed branch of the nation's Armed Forces in 56th position.

Of the 29 million people in the UK in employment, Stonewall says 1.7 million are gay – and hence its survey is a 'powerful tool' when they, plus the estimated 150,000 students who are homosexual, choose where to take their talent and skills.

"Congratulations to the Royal Navy for securing the 77th position on the 2012 top 100 employers list," said Ben Summerskill, Stonewall's Chief Executive.

"Competition for a place in the top 100 was fiercer than ever this

year. With new, more demanding criteria, every employer securing a position in the top 100 has performed impressively."

Taking part in the survey demonstrates to both the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender – and wider – communities that they will be treated fairly by maintaining commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and ensures that the Naval Service is in a position to attract and retain the best people.

The RN's considerable rise in the rankings over the past couple of years is believed to be the result of effective diversity strategies that included sexual orientation and visible commitment from top management; last year, for example, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery took part in Stonewall's 'Straight Allies' research which studied the role that straight people play in creating gay-friendly workplaces.

Cdre Rupert Wallace, Naval Assistant and the Senior Service's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender diversity champion, said: "We in the Naval Service are delighted to be placed in the Stonewall top 100 employers list for 2012.

"It shows a strong and clear message to the UK population, and especially the LGB community, that the Navy is an inclusive employer and that we are committed to embracing diversity and inclusion amongst our workforce."

# Tranche 2 of redundancies announced

**THE Strategic Defence and Security Review requires a significant reduction in the number of people in the Naval Service.**

This is to be achieved using a combination of our 'manning levers' and a compulsory redundancy programme.

During the planning phase of the redundancy programme in 2010, many assumptions had to be made about the future effectiveness of our 'manning levers' when setting the number of people required for compulsory redundancy.

A recent review of our manpower levels has revealed that those 'manning levers' have been more effective than originally expected, and so the need for further compulsory redundancies has been greatly reduced.

Therefore, not only will Tranche 2 be significantly smaller than Tranche 1, but it will also be the last full round of compulsory redundancies.

Further details can be found on the Naval Service Redundancy Programme web pages on the Defence Intranet (follow the links from the Royal Navy home page) or in the members' area of the RN Community web site (via the Internet).

## Key Dates

The key dates to be aware of are:

■ June 12 2012 – redundancy notification letters are handed to applicants and non-applicants.

■ June 12 2012 – letters despatched to all applicants not selected for redundancy.

■ December 11 2012 – all applicants selected for redundancy will have left the Service (six months after notification), except those completing operational

tours and post operational leave.

■ June 11 2013 – all non-applicants selected for redundancy will have left the Service (12 months after notification).

Personnel selected for redundancy can leave before these dates with the agreement of their Career Manager, but they must note that all applications for early release will be considered in the light of the needs of the Service.

## Fleet Redundancy Cell

The Fleet Redundancy Cell (FRC) remains the single point of contact for the Chain of Command and individuals who have questions or queries on redundancy policy or process.

The redundancy policy and processes for Tranche 2 will be very similar to those employed in Tranche 1, and details of these are on the redundancy web pages accessed via the Defence Intranet.

Just click on the Naval Service Redundancy Programme link from the Royal Navy home page to navigate to a full suite of information.

The contact details of the FRC are:

Fleet Redundancy Cell (FRC)  
Room G43  
West Battery  
Whale Island  
Portsmouth  
Hants  
PO2 8DX  
Mil: 93832 8987  
Civ: +44 (0) 2392 628987  
DII: [FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX@MOD.UK](mailto:FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX@MOD.UK)  
Internet: [FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX@MOD.UK](mailto:FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX@MOD.UK)

# Business appointment changes

THE Cabinet Office rules on the Acceptance of Outside Appointments contained in the Business Appointment Rules were updated in February 2011.

The Business Appointment Rules apply to all Officers, including Warrant Officers, in Her Majesty's Armed Forces; and to all MOD civilians

(described collectively as "Crown Servants") who are considering taking up paid or unpaid employment within two years of leaving paid Crown Service.

The Business Appointment Rules, supporting guidance, and the application form HR Form 038: MOD Business

Appointment Application can be found on the intranet under: People Services > Leaving the Department & Pensions > Business Appointments.

Please ensure if you are considering leaving the MOD, that you familiarise yourself with the Rules.

## Where to look

DIN 2011 DIN01-242: New Tri-Service Domestic Assistance Policy & Official Hospitality Policy for the Armed Forces and Civilians – JSP 915

DIN 2011 DIN01-243: Pension Tax Relief – Annual Allowance Scheme Pays

DIN 2011 DIN01-244: Changes to the risk management process for civilians on Departmental business

DIN 2012 DIN01-001: Department of Education (DfE) announce Service Pupil Premium Details

DIN 2012 DIN01-006: Pension Tax Relief – Lifetime Allowance – Fixed Protection

DIN 2012 DIN01-007: Electoral Registration – Members of the Armed Forces and their Spouses / Civil Partners

DIN 2012 DIN01-008: Further Legislative Changes made to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS)

DIN 2012 DIN01-009: MOD Armed Forces Support to The Prince's Trust Team Programme: Appeal for Short-Term Volunteer Leaders

DIN 2012 DIN01-013: Guidance for Service Personnel and their Families when Applying for Mortgages and Unsecured Credit

DIN 2012 DIN01-015: Single Service Charities – The Royal Navy/Royal Marines

DIN 2012 DIN01-019: Residential Support Scheme – Help with the Costs of Studying Away from Home – An Armed Forces Families Special Exemption

DIN 2012 DIN01-020: Naval Service Redundancy Programme – Policy

DIN 2012 DIN01-021: All England Lawn Tennis Championships – Wimbledon 2012

DIN 2012 DIN01-028: Changes to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005 (AFPS 05) and the Armed Forces Redundancy Scheme 2010 (AFRS 2010)

Galaxy Message 47-2011: Naval Service Commitment To Op Olympics

DIB 112/11: Publication of the Armed Forces Covenant Interim Annual Report

DIB 01/12: Services publish details for Tranche 2 of the Armed Forces Redundancy Programme

## Coming up in this edition:



1SL New Year Message

Resettlement Part 1

Redundancy Update

# Watch out for TwoSix

THE latest edition of *TwoSix*.tv features the First Sea Lord's annual message, redundancy and resettlement information, and a Paralympics hopeful. The DVD has been aligned with the Personnel Support Brief to provide an enhanced package for sharing information.

If you want to get your message out through these pages or the *TwoSix*.tv DVD, please contact:

■ Pauline Aquilina: 9621 85984  
■ WO1 Russ Billings: 93832 5081

Pauline Aquilina is also the first point of contact for the RN Facebook site.



## NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION

# When eight become one

IN THE JANUARY issue of *Navy News* we touched on the changes that are on the horizon for all families applying for Service Families Accommodation (SFA), whether re-locating, moving as a result of an increase in family size, promotion or using SFA for the first time, the changes that Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) have planned are gathering momentum, writes Jane Williams of the *Naval Families Federation*.

Moving home is not only considered to be one of the most stressful undertakings anyone can make but also has such a big impact on the whole family we thought that readers would want to have as much information as possible about the changes:

By April 2012 the eight Housing Information Centres (HICs), who have responsibility for the allocation of all SFA in the UK will be centralised down to one HIC split over two sites (Aldershot and Thetford).

They will also be renamed to HASC – Housing Allocation Service Centre. The phone number will remain the same: 0800 169 6322.

The Aldershot office will be



handling allocation of SFA for the South, South East (including London) and South West, the Thetford office handling East, West and North including Scotland.

The telephone lines into the HASC will remain open Monday to Friday, 08.30 to 15.00 for enquiries.

In step with the changes being made, all Service personnel submitting an 1132 (application for SFA) are being asked to use the electronic method of application.

The e-1132 can be found via the Intranet under the 'Admin' tab, then <http://apps01.domis.rmil.uk/e1132/>.

By submitting the application electronically applicants have the ability to not only know that the application has arrived, they will receive an acknowledgement via e-mail, but will also have the ability to track the application through to SFA offer.

The HASC will continue to accept completed paper 1132s as not every applicant has the opportunity to submit a request via the Intranet, however, the aspiration is that these will be the exception rather than the rule.

Incomplete or illegible applications will be returned to the Service Person to either re-submit or complete.

If you experience difficulties with your application please get in touch with the NFF.

In addition, the electronic application form (e-1132) will be enhanced to give applicants more information about available properties that match their eligibility, such as floor plans and photographs where applicable, and the ability to express a preference for the properties shown.

The improved system is expected to be launched in May 2012 once thorough testing has been undertaken.

The NFF sits on the user working group for the enhanced e-1132; if you would like to make any comments about the process or the information provided, then please get in touch.

If SFA is not available to applicants then the application will pass to a centrally-located SSFA (Substitute Service-Families Accommodation) team at RAF Brampton, who will ensure that the issue of Certificate of Non-Availability is handled swiftly and in accordance with the JSP464 guidelines.

The Certificate is required to enable the appointed letting agents HCR to undertake a search for suitable accommodation.

The NFF recommends that all applicants for SFA double check current guidelines for available allowances (JSP752) in support of any move or relocation.

Note from the NFF – DIO are working hard to make the transition as seamless as possible, but inevitably there will be cases where applicants experience challenges.

In these instances you can contact the NFF on: 02392 654374, or e-mail [admin@nff.org.uk](mailto:admin@nff.org.uk) for additional information or assistance.

A new information guide on Immigration and Nationality is now available on line via [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk), the guide gives information on subjects such as Issue of Passports, Visas and opportunities for settlement and/or citizenship plus the Armed Forces Covenant – Improvements to Immigration and Nationality matters.

In support of the announcements for Tranche 2 of the Naval Redundancies made on January 17 the NFF has a dedicated redundancy section on our website: [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk) to help in providing timely and correct information for those who need it.

Simply click on the dedicated button for 'Naval Service Redundancy Programme' to find information under the following headings:

Redundancy News.  
Resettlement Process.  
Employment/Training.  
Housing.  
Pensions/Compensation/ Allowances.

Appeals process.  
Fleet Redundancy Cell.  
Charitable Support.

Each of the headings is set up with links providing further

information on the selected subject.

The Fleet Redundancy Cell (FRC) will handle all individual questions from those Royal Naval personnel who are affected by the announcements ensuring information and guidance is consistent and accurate.

For families with questions please contact the NFF.

Contact details for The Fleet Redundancy Cell:

Room G43  
West Battery  
Whale Island  
Portsmouth  
Hants  
PO2 8DX  
Tel: +44 (0) 2392 628987  
Mil: 93832 8987  
E-mail:

[FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX@MOD.UK](mailto:FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX@MOD.UK)  
DII: [FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX](mailto:FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX)

The FRC office is open from 08:00 – 16:30 Monday – Friday.

Your experiences form the basis of our discussions. To contact the NFF: tel: 02392 654374, e-mail [admin@nff.org.uk](mailto:admin@nff.org.uk) or write to: Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

We look forward to hearing from you.



## WO takes seat on Institute council

A NAVAL Warrant Officer, WO1(AWW) Steve 'Shady' Lane, has recently been elected to sit on the Institute for Learning's (IfL) Advisory Council.

The IfL is the professional body for teachers, tutors, trainers and student teachers in the further education (FE) and skills sector, including the Armed Forces.

It is responsible for registering teachers, keeping an overview of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and conferring the professional status of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) and Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS).

The IfL Advisory Council distils the voice of members and influences and shapes IfL policy and strategy.

WO1 Lane is delighted to have been elected onto the council and intends to use his position to bring an Armed Forces perspective to the IfL in the hope that both the IfL and Armed Forces can learn from each other.

He also hopes to articulate the benefits of IfL membership and encourage individuals in all three Services to join (watch out for further information and 'road shows' or CPD events).

WO1 Lane said: "Belonging to a professional body such as the IfL has numerous benefits for the individual in the immediate and longer term.

"With various funding options available and in-service instructor courses being 'mapped across' to gain credits, there has never been a better time to achieve QTLS, which is a legal requirement to teach in the post compulsory sector (the Armed Forces are exempt from this legislation).

"For personnel who aspire to teach school children this could be an efficient way of reaching their goal; Government has endorsed proposals for those with QTLS to teach in schools, full details should become available in early 2012.

"While not every instructor or trainer aspires to teach on leaving the Service this is an excellent CPD opportunity, while at the same time gaining a desirable civilian qualification."

For further information visit [www.ifl.ac.uk](http://www.ifl.ac.uk) or contact WO1(AWW) Lane on [FLEET-HRTSG-REQWAR3](mailto:FLEET-HRTSG-REQWAR3) or 9380 20839.

# Busy year ahead for augmentees

**THE AUGMENTATION and Crisis Manpower Planning (ACMP) cell is a pan-Naval Personnel Team (NPT) within NCHQ.**

Under DNPers it delivers prioritised Naval Service (NS) augmentation manpower, in two distinct areas; the Operations Team, who focus on NS personnel deployed on current UK and multi-national operations, and the Exercise and Events team, who provide augmentee support to a wider range of national, public, military and ceremonial events and RN exercises.

In times of national crisis (ie national industrial action, floods) the ACMP cell will act as the manpower ops room to coordinate NS personnel in support of the UK's Standing Joint Commander.

Additionally, ACMP is the author and custodian of the RN BRIDGE plans, which it will coordinate when activated.

Hierarchically, ACMP sits above, and reaches into all other NPTs and career managers to deliver personnel resources in support of FLEET output.

To achieve this, ACMP spans the J1 spectrum, and through working closely with all stakeholders, provides the essential link between all additional manpower requirements and the personnel area in NCHQ.

During the peak in 2011, ACMP was the coordinating office for up to 1,700 NS personnel deployed ashore and afloat in over 30 countries.

### Operational Augmentees

ACMP is the primary point of contact for all requests by MOD, PJHQ and NCHQ for additional personnel in support of operations.

Most notably over recent time, has been Op Herrick. Currently the NS provides 180 individuals, represented at every rank, rotating every six months and working in all major UK and multinational HQs.

For the majority, individuals will have completed the NMT 104 course (weapon handling – SA80) (two weeks) and Cat 2 pre-deployment training (PDT) prior to deploying.

The latter is delivered by the Royal Navy Pre-Deployment Training and Mounting Centre, located in Jervis Block, HMS



## Drafty's corner

Nelson, which is a fundamental part of the ACMP team.

There are a number of specialist/trade positions that require additional employment training and longer tour durations (seven to 12 months).

Outside of the UK defence main effort, the NS currently has a further 420 augmentees; these are predominantly in support of core maritime operational tasks.

Op Telic has been replaced with a new focus and ACMP coordinate the 90 individuals (UKMCC) who form part of the UK continued commitment to ensuring a safe and secure maritime shipping environment within the Gulf region.

A further 50 individuals support the RN's ongoing counter-piracy tasks as part of Op Atalanta.

A niche but growing area of ACMP coordination deals with the UK's appetite for Counter Terrorist and Capability Building training teams.

Small in both size and duration, these jobs are JCTATT (Joint Counter Terrorist Training and Advisory Team) sponsored requiring an extended period of PDT focusing on small team tactics, foreign weapons, evasive driving and increased medical care due to the independent nature and isolated locations (Middle East, Africa).

The complex and enduring nature of the ACMP role requires continual HQ engagement and liaison throughout the force generation cycle to ensure the timely delivery of suitably qualified

and experienced personnel (SQEP) augmentees.

Whilst this engagement always tries to ensure that assigning policy and appointment warning times are adhered to, there are occasions when individuals are required at short notice to commence PDT and deploy within BR guidelines.

Equally the RN will continue to provide the UK with a unique capability to react quickly to potential trouble spots on a global scale.

This was clearly demonstrated during the Libya crisis where a number of platforms were re-routed and extended, however, there were also over 50 individuals who were surged rapidly.

Some were 'moved' with less than seven days notice to support the forward NATO HQ in Naples and the 24-hour rear-link ops room in London.

It is clear that the RN is a key contributor to the full spectrum of operations, UK political diplomacy and wider global events, so ACMP plays a pivotal role.

However, to be able to maintain a professional, flexible and deployable force, every individual and chain of command has a responsibility to ensure two key principles.

**■ Communication.** Career managers and front line Units have access to the list of augmentation jobs available through the ACMP cell. Volunteers are always preferred to pressed personnel and there are plenty of high priority yet rewarding jobs for every sailor and marine.

**■ Competency.** There is no excuse for being out of date for annual mandatory tests. It is incumbent on everyone to ensure they attend and can be released in order to maintain these basic standards, such as MATTs (Military Annual Training Tests), APWT, RNFT and BFT.

### Exercise & Events

ACMP also coordinate the delivery support of high profile exercises and events.

These vary from Joint Warrior – a fundamental building block of front-line maritime capability – through November Ceremonies, Armed Forces Day musters to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and Falklands Anniversary (25, 50 and 60-year anniversaries only)

parades.

All will require individuals of the highest calibre to represent the RN in front of a global audience.

In balancing the pull for SQEP resources across Exercises and Events and Operations, the ACMP team work alongside Career Managers/Management Cells and go to great lengths to ensure candidate suitability, including careful consideration of both individual circumstances and the needs of the Service.

The exercise (Tier 2+) and high profile events programme constitutes NCHQ planned activity that takes place at roughly the same time each year.

Consequently, ACMP are able to forecast forthcoming demand which assists greatly in planning manpower augmentation.

An annual Exercise and Event calendar is provided to the WMOs or specific unit manpower coordinators, identifying the manpower requirement as requested by the Sponsor of the activity.

Demands for major Fleet and NATO exercises are a significant part of augmentation business.

However, when compared with Operational Augmentation, it is generally delivered over a shorter term – normally two to three weeks at a time – although there are opportunities for longer spells of duty.

The ACMP team act as the coordinators of manpower to provide support to these; a task that could not be done without the assistance of the WMOs and manpower providers to advertise and find personnel for these popular events.

The exercise commitment that ACMP satisfies each year could give you the chance to exercise your branch skills in a different sphere, in a different HQ or in a different platform – with the added bonus on occasions of visiting somewhere outside the UK.

If you are interested in supporting any of the exercises, you should contact your employer and subsequently your career manager for further details and to identify yourself as a volunteer.

2012, however, will be dominated by the London Olympics.

Planning and preparation of

the RN's contribution is well under way.

Whilst a number of RN units and platforms have been committed there are still plenty of tasks and opportunities that will require ACMP to draw personnel in from across the Service.

The RN is already standing up a number of security positions with the Standing Joint Command located at PJHQ, but, outside formed units, the main commitment will be to support the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games' venue security force (VSF).

The majority of personnel will come from RM (3 Commando Brigade) and the Maritime Reserves but some volunteers are still required.

For all, however, prior training will be conducted as well as a bespoke security check, but the task does provide NS personnel the chance to be at the heart of the event.

### Long Look 2013

Exercise Long Look also sits within the ACMP portfolio of activity; it is an annual exchange programme managed by the Land Warfare Centre at Warminster.

It offers the RN 30 places, 20 of which are in Australia and ten in New Zealand.

Long Look is open to ranks ranging from LH to WO1 and junior Officers (up to Lt RN).

Posts are primarily reciprocal (by both branch and rate); however, exceptionally, there are some opportunities for personnel to exchange on a non-reciprocal basis, if clearance can be sought.

The exchange process occurs during the period March-July and is generated by an RNTM released in the preceding September with applications to be complete by November for the exchange the following year.

### Summary

The ACMP team are involved in the coordination of a wide range of military support across the full spectrum of activity.

Many NS personnel can benefit personally and/or professionally from experiences outside their routine employment. Volunteers are encouraged to exploit all that the Service has to offer.

In the first instance, talk to your Line Manager and then your Career Manager.

## Jewish community gathers for poignant parade

AT THE beginning of every January, the Armed Forces Jewish Community comes together at Amport House (the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre) for a community weekend of education, prayer and socialising, writes Lt Cdr Daniel Weil.

The typical Jewish Service person is in the main not particularly spiritual or a regular synagogue goer. However this weekend of prayer, discussions and learning tends to be really good for the soul – especially for recharging the kosher batteries.

The community now has a new Rabbi, Reuben Livingstone, who is a TA Rabbi and provides support alongside our Civilian Chaplain to the Military. This was his first time as course director and he had put together an interesting guest list and programme.

The attendees are an eclectic bunch. The weekend is aimed at and attended by Service men and women from all three Services and all ranks, retired Service personnel and their families.

However there are always others, often not Jewish, who come along, to give lectures or just to learn about our community.

As always the atmosphere of the

weekend starts slowly but builds after each glass of wine at dinner and in the bar.

This year we had as guests Rabbi Tony Hammond (who is the Reform Judaism Officiating Chaplain to the Military) and a retired American Rear Admiral Rabbi Harold Robinson who is still heavily involved in the US military Jewish system.

Friday evening started with Ma'arev (evening service) followed by welcoming in the Shabbat (the seventh day of the week and a day of rest). The services were explanatory in nature with a significant amount of audience participation and a lot of English so that everyone could follow no matter what the standard of an individual's Hebrew.

Following Shabbat, we had the Sabbath dinner. The Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre makes a real effort to kosher the kitchens and the food is generally very good. The meals also provide the opportunities for further discussions, rekindling friendships and general singing.

Friday evening then culminated in a talk by Colonel Rabbi Menachim Sebbag who is the senior Dutch military chaplain

and particularly good at relating Jewish life with the pragmatics of serving in the Armed Forces.

Saturday morning was back in synagogue (or the chapel attached to the original house – beautifully done) with an interesting Torah (Jewish bible) service and a superb sermon from Rabbi Reuben.

However the highlight of the service was a call up for a recently married (mixed faith) Service couple in order to receive a blessing from the rabbi. It was really well handled, very moving and emphasised the open and welcoming nature of the community.

This year's Torah portion looked at the death of Jacob in Egypt and the blessing he gave his sons and the sons of Joseph. Discussion centred on organisational (family in Jacob's case) squabbles and how we should consider/understand the perspective of the other person in an argument.

This is particularly relevant at this current time as the RN, Army and RAF debate funding, equipment and people and the failure to perhaps understand the other organisation's point of view.

Normally, the Sunday morning is a short optional service, followed

by a community discussion, lunch and departure. However this year was different and particularly special.

The parents of Lt Paul Mervis, 2nd Battalion, The Rifles – the first Jew to be killed in action since the Falklands War – had paid for a Torah scroll to be restored and presented to the Armed Forces Jewish Community.

So Sunday morning saw a parade of the Torah into the synagogue in front of his family, our community, the Chaplain General of the Army and General Parker (Commandant General of Paul's regiment). The service was very simple but extremely emotional and the General spoke brilliantly about Paul.

Once again, this community event proved to be an excellent weekend with a great mix of fun, learning and spiritual development for everyone in and interested in the Armed Forces Jewish Community.

The Jewish Community continues to grow in the Armed Forces and the recognition of British Service men and women, both Jewish and non, continues to improve in the wider civilian Jewish community with outreach

work being undertaken by Jewish sailors, soldiers and airmen.

There are approximately ten RN personnel who declare their religion as Jewish on JPA. As a percentage of the RN population (likely to be 30,000 in 2020) this equates to 0.0003 per cent. The census calculated (2001) Jewish population of the UK (approximately 260,000) as a percentage of the UK population (approximately 60 million) is 0.004 per cent.

This difference is of an order of magnitude of at least ten times more Jews/person in the UK than those that serve in the RN.

Why this is the case is an excellent question. However it is clear that there are a significant number of personnel who consider themselves Jewish (or other religions for that matter) but do not declare it on JPA.

Again, why this is the case is open to interpretation and debate, however if you want to change your JPA status or simply want to learn more about Judaism please do not hesitate to get in touch.

For more information on the Armed Forces Jewish Community please contact Lt Cdr Daniel Weil at [daniel.weil568@mod.uk](mailto:daniel.weil568@mod.uk).







# SAR focus at Falmouth Maritime Museum

THE public can gain an insight into the world of Search and Rescue from next month – a proverbial stone’s throw from RNAS Culdrose, home to one of the country’s busiest lifesaving teams.

The National Maritime Museum Cornwall on Falmouth’s waterfront is staging a two-year exhibition celebrating the deeds of all those dedicated to risking their lives so others might live in waters around the UK.

The exhibition – simply titled Search and Rescue and opening on March 16 – has the backing of 771 Naval Air Squadron, the Culdrose-based squadron dedicated to helping stricken mariners off the Cornish coast, as well as holidaymakers who get into difficulties and road accident victims in south-west Cornwall who need urgent transfer to hospital.

Accounts from some of 771’s famous – and also lesser-known – rescues feature in the exhibition, as do various pieces of lifesaving equipment... and a 70ft Sea King, the aircraft which is the mainstay of Fleet Air Arm and RAF Search and Rescue units.

The helicopter is the largest item on display at the exhibition and has been painted in the Navy’s trademark red and grey on one side, and the RAF distinctively-bright yellow on the other.

As well as championing the work of aviators, the exhibition showcases the work of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (there’s a small Atlantic 75 inflatable as used by inshore crews on display), Coastguards (courtesy of mock-up interactive operations centre) and lifeguards (with the opportunity for younger visitors to have a go at keeping virtual swimmers safe).

However the highlight for many visitors is likely to be the live-action demonstrations to be held

sporadically throughout the two-year exhibition.

These will include air-sea rescue practices in Falmouth Harbour – which is used regularly for training by 771 crews, based just ten miles away – ‘meet the crew’ days, and visits by RNLi all-weather lifeboats with the chance for the public to clamber aboard.

Royal Navy fliers and ground crew sustain two of the 12 helicopter Search and Rescue units peppered around the UK, alongside the RAF and Coastguard. In addition to 771 Culdrose, HMS Gannet at Prestwick, near Ayr, provides round-the-clock assistance in the northern Irish Sea, Clyde estuary and the Western Highlands; it is Britain’s busiest Search and Rescue unit – although the bulk of its missions are flown over land, assisting walkers and climbers in difficulty.

771, whose men and women have flown more than 500 rescue missions in the past two years, has provided accounts of rescues past and present, which form a central spine of the helicopter side of the exhibition.

“At its heart is our helicopter, which has its own long and distinguished career, and the vast range of information, pieces of equipment, items from numerous rescues conducted off the Cornish coast and personal recollections from crews which will be an inspiration, both for the young – and the young at heart,” said Lt Cdr Chris ‘Damage’ Canning, 771’s Commanding Officer.

More details about the exhibition and museum in general – it’s a sister to the older, world-famous institution at Greenwich – can be found at [www.nmmc.co.uk](http://www.nmmc.co.uk); details about the live demonstrations will be posted on the site nearer the time.

## Specialist insurance for Forces personnel

FORCES Insurance is the new name for TFI, offering specialist service to the Armed Forces.

The company says that the name change represents the level of service, dedication and support that members of the Forces have to their country, each other and the commitment Forces Insurance has to them.

At the heart of the Forces Insurance brand is a new logo featuring a working ant, nicknamed FIL. The Ant has been specifically chosen and designed to symbolise the way the Armed Forces work together as a team.

The specialist Forces motor insurance policy

offered by Forces Insurance is tailored to the needs of Service personnel.

“Normal policies provided for civilians just don’t meet the needs of the Forces,” explained their Director of Operations, Keith Frampton.

“Simple things like full cover on base and being able to suspend cover when you are on deployment are just not available from most insurers but are automatically provided under our policy,” added Mr Frampton.

To discover more about Forces Insurance please visit [www.forcesinsurance.co.uk](http://www.forcesinsurance.co.uk) or call +44 (0) 1509 221390.

# Questions answered by Forces Pension Society

REDUNDANCY isn’t far from anyone’s mind. *David Marsh, Pensions Secretary, from the Forces Pension Society, can answer questions about how this affects your pension.*

**Question:** AFPS05 literature states that dependant’s pensions can be valued up to 62.5 per cent of the value of the Serviceman’s or Servicewoman’s pension – when would a dependant’s pension be worth less than 62.5 per cent?

**Answer:** If you leave with more than 37.333 years’ reckonable service for pension purposes.

The reason for this is that the AFPS05 pension scheme is not approved by Royal Warrant and Prerogative Instruments like the old AFPS75 scheme is, but it is sanctioned by an Act of Parliament and is Inland Revenue approved.

This, in turn, limits the award of Widow/Widower/Civil Partner/Eligible Partner pensions by allowing only 37.333 years’ service to count because, at that point, and with the strong accrual rate used by the scheme to calculate such pensions, it has reached the maximum the Inland Revenue will allow such schemes to pay.

So, on this occasion it is not the MOD being stingy, they are not allowed to pay any more.

**Question:** At what age are Preserved Pensions and Preserved Lump Sums payable for those leaving on the AFPS05 pension scheme?

**Answer:** Normally they are payable at age 65.

However, they can be payable from age 55 if the individual wants to have them put into payment earlier, but there is a price to pay!

For each year earlier than age 65 preserved pensions are put into payment the value is reduced by 5 per cent, and for each year the preserved lump sum is paid the value of it is reduced by 3 per cent.

You are not allowed to take one portion of Preserved Benefits early and leave the other portion until age 65 – take one part and you have to take the other part at the same time too.

Therefore, if, for example, somebody age 61 decides to take their Preserved Benefits at that age, instead of waiting until age 65, the value of the pension would be reduced by 20 per cent and the value of the lump sum would be reduced by 12 per cent.

## Ask Jack

Devonport Field Gun Crew: In 1956 I was in the Royal Navy’s Devonport Field Gun Crew whose base was HMS Drake in Devonport and subsequently Devonport Dockyard remained the home for the Devonport Field Gun Association. I’m sure some of your readers will remember the Royal Navy Field Gun competitions which were part of the Royal Tournament each year until 1999. Earlier this year the Ministry of Defence gave the Field Gun Association notice to leave Devonport Dockyard. The Association were fortunate to find a new home at Crownhill Fort in Plymouth which is now a small Devonport Field Gun Museum. When all the Field Gun records and equipment were transferred to Crownhill in September it became apparent that all records and photographs for the 1956 crew were missing. I wonder if it would be possible to trace any field gunners from 1956, or any other year, who may have some photographs or any other personal records or memories. If we were able to make copies they could then be included in the Museum records. Field Gunners feel a tremendous pride in their achievements and I know how much it would mean to me and to any other 1956 Field Gunners to have our achievements included in the Museum rather than feel, as I do, that we are the forgotten year. I would also be delighted to hear from old field gunners of any year and, if they are interested, I could give them details of the Devonport Field Gun Association. Contact Stewart McKenzie at [stewartmckenzie@talktalk.net](mailto:stewartmckenzie@talktalk.net) or tel: 01200 429825.

HMS Eagle 1964-67: Ex Killick Chef, Pete Bailey is trying to contact his old shipmates from 3D2 mess. They are: Dave Tallack, Charlie Higgins, Joe Diack, Smudge Smith, George Curry, Jan Searle, Jim Bennett, Jed Stone, Alfie Upton and Oscar Wilde. If they are still out there would love to hear from you at [galleyrat@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:galleyrat@blueyonder.co.uk) or tel: 01752 299091.

Whatever happened to L/S Murphy? If you served with this man you will recall a larger than life character with renowned seamanship skills but a memorable personality. Believed to have served in HMS London, first commission 1963-65. Known to have served Tiger 1965-66 and Llandaff 1967-68. Seeking personal memories of Spud to complete his profile. Contact Tas Scully at [tasscully@btinternet.com](mailto:tasscully@btinternet.com) or tel: 01273 844453.

HMS Ganges: Trying to contact guys from 25 Recruitment 47 & 168 classes 1959/60. Instructors were Gl Thommo Thompson and PO Pricky Vice. I have already met up with a few guys and am hoping to contact a few more. You might remember me as Ben Lyon. Contact me at [ljyontamer960@btinternet.com](mailto:ljyontamer960@btinternet.com) or tel: 01738 827122.

Brass Cannon: I am trying to find the whereabouts of a Brass Cannon that I found in the Jungles of Brunei in 1963. It was solid brass and bore the inscription “presented to the Pengulu of Baton Duri by the Dutch East Indies Company”, dated late 1800s. It was too heavy to carry out of the jungle and a helicopter pilot from HMS Bulwark said that he would take it back to Bulwark for me. I haven’t seen it since. I heard on the grapevine that it was kept in the wardrobe on HMS Bulwark. I would dearly love to hear from anyone who knows its whereabouts as I feel that some museum might be interested. I don’t want it back I just would like to think that it has a good home. Contact Jack Wall at [j.wall703@ntlworld.com](mailto:j.wall703@ntlworld.com) or tel: 01925 243775.

HMS Walker: We at <http://www.naval-history.net> have had an enquiry reference whether there are any reunions scheduled for HMS Walker shipmates. Granted, the original WW2 crew would all be in the 80s and 90s if surviving, but I could think of no better source to ask. If you can help contact Don Kindell at [dkindell1@woh.rr.com](mailto:dkindell1@woh.rr.com) or write to PO Box 445, 7595 East Franklin Street, Conover, Ohio 45317, USA.

STASO: I am writing up my diary I kept on only one ship, HMS Plymouth, whilst on the FE station. I have made a note saying STASO left the ship today. I do not know what that is now after 49 years! Anyone out there know? (I was a leading seaman on this ship and a sonar specialist so I thought perhaps Station Anti Submarine Officer?) For your information I am going to try and get this published when it is complete. I have another source of information, my wife kept every single letter I ever wrote to her and with ten years worth, there are hundreds and hundreds of them! If anyone can help it would make Ivan happy! If you can help, contact Ivan Johnston at [ivanjeanjohnston@aol.com](mailto:ivanjeanjohnston@aol.com) or tel: 01697 73760.

HMS Raleigh: Seeking an old friend, Kevin Gill and his wife Charlotte, they had a son and daughter. He was at HMS Raleigh and served as an engineer. He has been in the Navy for about 20 years and lived in a Naval house in Plymouth. If anyone can help please contact John Bagworth at [jdbagworth@btinternet.com](mailto:jdbagworth@btinternet.com) or tel: 01400 281137.

HMS St James 1953: Mike ‘Buck’ Taylor is seeking anyone who served on St James. Mike was an AB and then L/Sea. Quartermaster at the time. You may well remember his ‘Wakey, Wakey’. Contact Mike at [m.taylor132422@btinternet.com](mailto:m.taylor132422@btinternet.com) or tel: 07966 265242

## Sports lottery

December 10: £9,000 – AB2 R L Connick; £2,000 – Mne J L White; £1,000 – LH D D Hinds; £800 – PO L S Cox; £700 – LH J R Chisholm; £600 – AB1 C M Storey.

December 17: £5,000 – C/Sgt A J Heriot; £1,500 – S/Lt R W Clarke; £500 – Mne G L Kelly.

December 24: £5,000 – PO J S Hemmings; £1,500 – Lt J A Collier; £500 – AB1 L M Seaward.

December 31: £5,000 – AB1 L Parry; £1,500 – Cpl J Hill; £500 – AB1 C Bicar.

January 7: £5,000 – Mne C Simpson; £1,500 – CPO P Winter; £500 – LH N J Smit.

## Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email [patn-rec@hotmail.com](mailto:patn-rec@hotmail.com). A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

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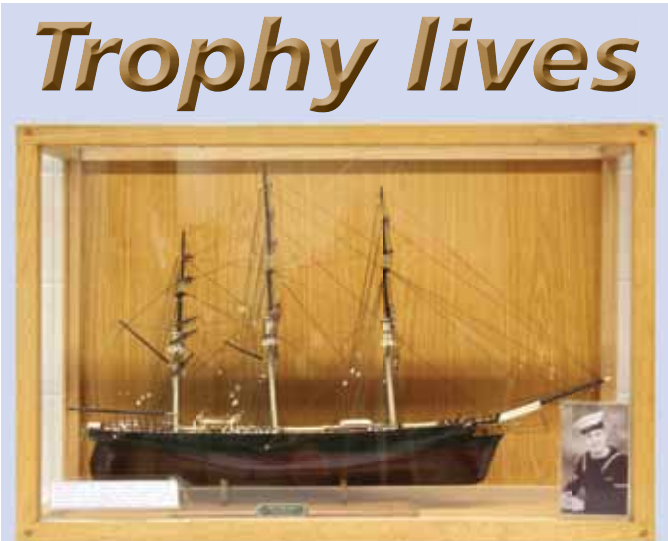
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FOLLOWING the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on 2 August 1990, a United Nations Coalition force was formed with the dual objectives of defending Saudi Arabia against possible Iraqi attack and liberating Kuwait; under American leadership the two aims were respectively codenamed Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Within one week of the occupation of Kuwait British military involvement in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf had been authorised under the name of Operation Granby – this name coming from John Manners, the Marquis of Granby, who had commanded British forces at the 1759 Battle of Minden, in northern Germany, during the Seven Years War.

All three Services were represented in the British contribution to the Coalition which was, by some considerable margin, the largest of any European nation.

In total, the British forces included about 2,500 armoured vehicles and 43,000 troops.

The Royal Navy was represented by 21 surface combatant ships, two submarines, 11 RFAs and six Fleet Air Arm Squadrons; a total of 2,821 Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel were deployed afloat with a further 565 ashore.

Iraqi resistance lasted until a cease-fire on February 28 1991; in the intervening seven months the Iraqi Navy had been wiped out while the Royal Navy had conducted 200 underway replenishments and fired 26 Sea Skua missiles – 18 of which hit their intended targets.

Throughout this period the search for and clearance of

mines had continued, as had the searching of merchant ships in accordance with a United Nations embargo on the importing into Iraq of certain cargoes.

Three days before the end of the war the destroyer Gloucester detected an Iraqi Silkworm missile heading for the American battleship USS Missouri – the Silkworm was successfully engaged and destroyed by a Sea Dart missile.

One of the other Type 42 destroyers involved was HMS Exeter and one of the Trophies for which this ship was the Prime Custodian is **Trophy 26584**, a model of the China tea clipper Cutty Sark.

This model, which is based on an Airfix plastic kit, was made by the former Stoker 1st Class George Darley (whose photograph is attached to the model’s display case) who had joined the previous Exeter, a heavy cruiser, in 1938.

He was in the ship at the Battle of the River Plate in December 1939 and was still onboard when she, together with the destroyers HMS Encounter and USS Pope, were sunk by the Japanese cruisers Haguro and Nachi and seven destroyers in the second Battle of the Java Sea on March 1 1942.

Surviving the sinking, Stoker Darley and 650 shipmates were captured and spent the rest of World War 2 in a Prisoner of War camp at Macassar in the Celebes islands – now Indonesia.

Sadly 150 of those captured failed to survive the War.

George Darley’s ashes were committed to the deep from the Type 42 destroyer Exeter in January 1999, following which the model of the Cutty Sark was given to the ship by his son, Alex.



## Honours

The New Year's Honours list 2012 published on December 31 2011:

**Appointments to the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath**  
**As Knight Commander**  
 Vice Admiral Paul Lambert  
**As Companions**  
 Vice Admiral Philip Andrew Jones

Major General Jeremy Hywel Thomas DSO Royal Marines

**Appointments to the Military Order of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire**  
**As Commanders**  
 Captain Paul Abraham  
 Captain Steven Dainton  
 Surgeon Rear Admiral Lionel John Jarvis QHS

Commodore Robert Joseph Thompson  
**As Officers**  
 Captain Robert Stuart Alexander  
 Commander Simon Phillip Asquith  
 Commander Michael Robert James Maltby  
 Captain Dean George Molyneaux  
 Commodore John Keith Moores  
 Commander Peter Nicholas Olive  
 Captain Jonathan Patrick Pentreath

### As Members

Warrant Officer 1 (Abovewater Warfare Tactical) Gerard Maurice Burns Warfare Specialist

Chief Petty Officer Coxswain (Submarines) Martin Farr

Lieutenant Commander Lee Hazard

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Michael Leaver

Lieutenant Commander Mandy Sheila McBain

Lieutenant Commander Stuart Charles William Millen

Lieutenant Commander Richard Hugh Witte

Warrant Officer 1 (Abovewater Warfare Tactical) Nicholas Payne Warfare Specialist

Acting Lieutenant Colonel Richard Joseph Rearden Royal Marines

Major Derek Bryan Stafford Royal Marines

Warrant Officer 2 Robert Toomey Royal Marines

Commander Noel John Wheatley Royal Navy Reserve (Sea Cadet Corps)

Colour Sergeant Matthew John Wilkinson Royal Marines

Major Dean Ashley Williams Royal Marines

**Queen's Volunteer Reserves Medal**

Chief Petty Officer (New Entry Instructor) David Henry Gibson Royal Naval Reserve

## Deaths

Captain Tom Jennings RM. Died after the vehicle he was travelling in struck an explosive device whilst on an operation to the south of Kabul, Afghanistan. December 22. Aged 29. *See page 4.*

Andrew 'Andy' Broadfoot. Yeoman of Signals. Joined Bruce 1947 Signal Boy then served Jamaica, Warrior, Cardigan Bay (Korean War), Vanguard, Gambia, Venus and Apollo. HMS Bruce Association. December 2011. Aged 79.

Terence Alfred John 'Taj' Andrews. PO/AL. Served 1952-70 in Eagle, Victorious, Indefatigable and Brighton. December 18. Aged 75.

Leonard 'Len' Jordan. EM. Served on board Cheviot 1948 and a member of the association. November 13.

Brian Holmes. Ch Mech(E). Served 1953-80 in Indefatigable, Dunkirk, Pelican, Blackpool, Bermuda, Belfast, Lynx, Yarrton, Lindisfarne, Sultan, Maidstone (Northern Ireland), Hecla and Hydra also Chief of Dock Faslane. Last deploy onboard Training ship for final leg of 'Operation Drake' (Eye of the Wind). 2011. Aged 75.

Bob Anderson RM. Olympic fencer and movie sword master who stepped in during key fight scenes including three of the original Star Wars films *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of The Jedi*. January 1. Aged 89.

Ian Smith. CPO. Served in Ganges, Bristol, Puma, Galatea, Torquay and Southampton. November. Aged 59.

David A Cook. WO MEA(P). Served 1962-90 in Aisne, Forth (Singapore 1967-69), Kent, Devonshire and London. November 16 in Spain but flown home for burial in Portsmouth. Aged 70.

Wilfred 'Benny' or 'Wilf' Bartlett. AB Radar Operator. Served 1947-54 in Dryad, St George, Cheviot, Tenacious, St Vincent, Victory, Vengeance and Howe. HMS Cheviot Association. December 24.

Peter George 'PG Tips' 'Robbie' 'Jo-90' Roberts. Cook. Served 1958-67 in Pembroke, Excellent, BRNC Dartmouth, St Vincent and Victory, also Jaguar and Victorious. Aged 71.

Brian Silk. POME. Served 1954-77 in Raleigh, Victory, Saintes, Bellerophon, Armada, Triumph, Pembroke, Tiger, Sultan Dingley, Leopard, Vernon, Dufon, Echo, Llandaff, Drake, Albion, Hydra, Upton and Nelson. Ton Class Association. October 28. Aged 74.

David A Lowe. LME Stoker branch. Served 1945-58 in submarines Alliance, Affray, Anchorite, Trenchant, Tudor, Truncheon, Sea Devil, Springer, XE7 and XE8, Expunger also Hedingham Castle. December 18. Aged 83.

Donald Frazer 'Taff' Campbell. LSeaman. Served 1949-55 in St Vincent, Whirlwind, Drake (x3), Black Swan, AB aboard Unicorn 3rd Commission (1951-52) and Battleaxe. Discharged to Royal Fleet Reserve. HMS Unicorn Association. September 13. Aged 78.

Ronald Amos. 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiment. Unicorn in transit 1951 to Singapore and Hong Kong. HMS Unicorn Association. July 29. Aged 79.

C/Sgt David Farrow RM. Served 1953-75 in the Arabian Peninsula, Cyprus and Malaysia. Upon leaving the Marines he worked 12 years as a chief driving instructor for the MOD at Bordon; local councillor for 16 years and Havant Mayor 1999-2000. December 26. Aged 76.

Colin Fairbrother. LOEM. Served 1958-68 in submarines Alderney, Astute, Aurochs, Solent, Trenchant and Valiant. Derbyshire Submariners Association. December 22.

Gordon Blackmore. Fleet Chief. Served 1943-76. As part of his career he served in Burma and on loan to the US Navy. Awarded BEM 1964 also served on loan to the Malaysian Navy 1964 where he was awarded the PPM in 1967. Royal British Legion. January 6. Aged 84.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION  
 Frederick 'Fred' Cooper. Joined Raleigh 1950 aged 16. Served as a ship's diver; stationed Malta, Agadir; also Tyne and Ark Royal. Founder member of Cyprus branch. December 4.

James Henry Green. Served Argonaut during WW2. Skipton & District RNA. December 12. Aged 86.

Harry Harper. 1943 he transferred from the army into the RN and served aboard Sheffield until demob in 1946. Life member of Stourbridge branch and treasurer for several years. November 25.

John Edward Saffery. President of Whitstable RNA and Chairman from 1997-2011. December 6. Aged 82.

Thomas 'George' Crawley. CMEA. Served 1950-69 in Triumph, Surprise, Puma, Paladin, Layburn, Rame Head, Hartland Point and Diana. Chatham branch. December 14. Aged 82.

Ian Wigston. Chief Mechanician and Instructor at Ganges. Seconded to Staff of First Sea Lord and served Newfoundland of which association he was chairman. Vice chairman of Maidstone RNA. January 1. Aged 80.

Sidney 'Sid' Dufon. L/Tel. Served 1940-46 in Royal Arthur, RNB Chatham, Goshawk (RNAS Trinidad), Clarkia, NP1734 (Royal Edgar) and NP1730 (Royal Alfred). Life Vice President of Lincoln RNA for many years. December 28. Aged 92.

Gordon Collings. Riggers Mate. War service in Rosyth (Rooke) and served Wildfire 1940-45. Ipswich RNA. September. Aged 93.

Doug 'Nick' Carter. CPO. Service career included Instructor at Ganges. National Life Vice President Ipswich branch and Area 5 National Council Member 11 years. October.

James 'Barney' Barnett. POMEM. Served 1965-83 in Zest, Lynx, Penelope, Ark Royal and Alacrity. Member and past Social Secretary Weymouth RNA. December 4. Aged 62.

Albert Webb. PO AF/A FAA 1940-47. Served in Argos, Owl, Jackdaw and Daedalus. Founder member Lichfield RNA and Standard Bearer for many years. December 30. Aged 89.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION  
 Albert Home. POAM(A). Served 1942-46. Ford branch. October 25.

Thomas 'Tom' Hall. LAM(A). Served 1940-45. Birmingham branch. December 17.

James Litchfield. AM(A). Served 1942-46 in Gosling, RAF Hednesford (training), Heron, Robin, Sparrowhawk, Indefatigable, Nabstock (MONAB VI Queensland, Australia), Humming Bird and Siskin; 759 and 1770 NAS. Daedalus branch. December 12. Aged 88.

SLt Ray Brant. (AE). Served 1944-46. Birmingham branch. December 19.

Frederick 'Fred' Good. PO TAG3. Served 1942-46. Initial training at Royal Arthur prior to posting to Canada to train as a Telegraphist Air Gunner (TAG) and served on board MAC Empire MacKendrick with Merchant Aircraft Carrier operational Squadron 846 patrolling the Atlantic Gap; also Waxwing, Daedalus, Shrike, Godwit and 1702 and 758 squadrons. Member of Telegraphist Air Gunners Association, Merchant Navy Association (DEMS member) also Secretary of Watford branch FAA Association. December 16. Aged 87.

Norman 'Darby' Allan. WO(AEM). Served in Ganges, Bulwark and RNAS Cildrose. FAA and a member of the Aircrwoman Association. November 5. Aged 68.

Sydney Thompson. NAM 1 (AE). Served 1956-66, in Daedalus, Gamecock, Fulmar, Ark Royal (800 NAS 1960-61), Condor, Centaur (893 NAS), Fulmar Station Flight (1963-64) and on loan to the Army Air Corps (1964-66). Daedalus branch. October 10.

ALGERIENS ASSOCIATION  
 Lt Cdr Peter Granger. Served in Rifleman and Albacore. July 19.

Anthony Harrison. Ld/Wr. Served in Mariner. November 9. Aged 81.

Walter Mansbridge. AB. Served in Felicity. December 1. Aged 88.

Frank Savage. AB. Served in Vestal. December 8. Aged 86.

Donald Cole. ERA. Served in Wave. December 15. Aged 86.

Gerald Shipstone. AB. Served in Gozo. December 24. Aged 86.

## 1972 1982 1992 2002 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● Wrens Maureen Logan (left) and Sally Peddle test out HMS Invincible's ski-ramp after a sudden snowfall lends a wintry aspect to the carrier's deck

### February 1972

PLANS were well under way for more ships to join the 'Undergrad Fleet' run by university naval units, following the success of the first two ships.

One of the first universities to have its own warship was Aberdeen, with HMS Thornham, which had already taken undergraduates from the naval unit to Dartmouth and continental ports every summer.

The next universities in line for a ship were Liverpool, Southampton and Glasgow.

### February 1982

SO that's why it's called a ski ramp! Wrens Maureen Logan and Sally Peddle are pictured above taking advantage of a heavy snowfall to test out the ramp of HMS Invincible alongside in Portsmouth.

The Wrens, both based in the naval base, borrowed the equipment from a sports' shop in Southsea to practise their skiing skills after heavy snow blanketed the carrier's ramp and flight deck.

### February 1992

NAMES were announced for the three Duke class frigates about to be built by Yarrow Shipbuilders on the Clyde.

They were to be called Somerset, Grafton, and Sutherland, only one of which – Grafton – had been used for a ship in the 20th century.

The only previous Somerset had been a third rate in 1748, although there were two earlier Somersetts.

Work was due to begin on the first of the three later in the year.

### February 2002

A DUTCH ship bound for training with FOST came bearing gifts at Devonport Naval Base, in the shape of hundreds of tulip bulbs.

The traditional gift of tulips from the Royal Netherlands Navy began in 1946 as a tribute to the 'hospitality, friendship and wonderful sportsmanlike spirit of the Royal Navy which has been an inspiration.'

The 470 bulbs were delivered by the Dutch ship HNLMS Bloys van Treslong.

FEBRUARY 2012  
 Bay Class Frigates Association: Reunion at the Sarisbury Social Club, Sarisbury on February 14. All ex-Bay Class welcome. Contact Doug Turk at [doug.turk@ntlworld.com](mailto:doug.turk@ntlworld.com) or tel: 01252 378629 for details.

MARCH 2012  
 HMS Duchess Association: Hold their next reunion from March 9 to 11 at the Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford. All commissions are welcome. For full details contact Sharky Ward at 17 Marne Gardens, Lincoln LN1 3UQ or tel: 01522 872998.

RN Communications Association: AGM and Annual Dinner at the Holiday Inn, Southampton from March 9 to 11. For more information contact Carl Beeson, Hon Sec at [carl@summerskills.co.uk](mailto:carl@summerskills.co.uk) or tel 01752 481283 (W) or 01752 253746 (H).

HMS Fearless Reunion 2012: Reunion will take place in the Invincible Room, at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea on March 17. 2012 will be the 10th anniversary since HMS Fearless de-commissioned and also the 30th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict. The evening will include entertainment, buffet and a raffle/auction. Proceeds will be donated to RN & RM Charity and a local special needs school. Price per ticket: £20.00. Tickets may be collected from WO1(MAA) Kev Williams at Whale Island or alternatively, he will post them to you on receipt of your payment (please provide a SAE). Cheques are to be made payable to: HMS Fearless L10 Association. Places will be on a first come basis and limited to a maximum of 300. For further details contact WO1(MAA) Kev Williams at [kevinwilliamsmb@btinternet.com](mailto:kevinwilliamsmb@btinternet.com) or tel: (93832 7060/02392 547060 or 07799 640507).

HMS Glory Reunion: Takes place at the Savoy Hotel, Bournemouth from March 23 to 26. All old Glory shipmates are welcome. Details from Tom Stallard at [margaretstallard@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:margaretstallard@yahoo.co.uk) or tel 01303 256457.

RNXS (East Anglia) Group: The annual reunion will take place at the Shipwreck (ex HMS Ganges, Enright Block) on March 25 – 1130 through 1500. Buffet lunch and raffle £10. Contact Len Manners on 01562 561968.

The Inaugural Royal Navy Commando Dinner: Takes place in the Mountbatten Suite, RM Museum, Southsea on March 29. The Guest Speaker will be Rear Admiral Simon Goodall. The dinner is open to any individual who has completed commando training and subsequently been a serving member of the RN, to include retired personnel and commando trained individuals who have transferred from other services. Dress will be Mess Undress/1s or black tie for civilian guests and the cost is expected to be around £30 depending on sponsorship. Those interested should contact CPO Watson on 023 9254 2701 at the earliest opportunity to secure their place. This promises to be a night to remember.

APRIL 2012  
 Jungle Dinner: Commando Helicopter Force will hold its annual Jungle Dinner on April 19 at the Wardroom, RNAS Yeovilton. All Junglies both serving and retired are welcome to attend. Details available from [chf-jungledinner@mod.uk](mailto:chf-jungledinner@mod.uk) Numbers limited.

HMS Middleton (L74) Association: 28th Reunion will be on April 27 and 28 at the RNA Club, Royal Leamington Spa. All supporters welcome. Details from Mike Alston, 6 Belmont Park Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 6HT or tel: 01628 629655.

HMS Cumberland Association: The reunion will be held at the Royal Clifton Hotel, Southport, PR8 1RB from April 27 to 30. All men and women who served on the County class cruiser or the Type 22 frigates are welcome to attend. Booking forms can be obtained from the Chairman Sam Watson at [sjwba11003@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:sjwba11003@blueyonder.co.uk) or tel: 01634 235861.

RN Display Team 1985: Where are you now? We are trying to develop the RN Display Team 1985 Facebook page, with a view to a first reunion to be held on April 28, 2012. If you have problems accessing Facebook please email Ian Smith at [ian.smith54@ntlworld.com](mailto:ian.smith54@ntlworld.com) or tel: 01933

386519.

MAY 2012  
 North Russia Club: Reunion will take place at the West Hill Hotel, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3HB from 5 to 12 May. Book direct or contact Harry Allen on 01843 832943 or Austin Byrne at [austinyrne@talktalk.net](mailto:austinyrne@talktalk.net), tel: 01274 881821.

HMS Wizard & Cadiz Association: AGM/Reunion at Torquay from May 11 to 14. Growing membership. All commissions, ranks and rates welcome. Contact Jim Watkins at [jimandleah@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jimandleah@hotmail.co.uk) or tel: 01872 274419.

BRNC May 1972 Entry: 40th anniversary reunion. Were you one of us? Are you interested? E-mail your details without attachments to [BRNCMay72entry@aol.com](mailto:BRNCMay72entry@aol.com) for further details or call 0114 255 3556.

HMS Minerva Reunion: This will take place on May 18 at the Commissioner's House in the Historic Dockyard, Chatham, where there will be an afternoon reception followed by an opportunity for a less formal get-together in a local hostelry. For more information contact Barry Miller at [barrymiller166@btinternet.com](mailto:barrymiller166@btinternet.com) or tel: 020 8313 4190 (W) 01732 700633 (H).

JUNE 2012  
 HMS Ganges (RNTE Shotley): To all ex HMS Ganges personnel, a reunion is to be held at Pakefield, Lowestoft (formerly Pontins) from June 22 to 25. Options other than the full three nights are available for booking. Open to all ex Ganges and all are welcome to possibly the last opportunity to visit the old place and museum before the developers start on it. Details and bookings from Robbie Robson at [robbie.fna@virgin.net](mailto:robbie.fna@virgin.net) or tel: 0191 584 7058.

HMS Liverpool Association: The reunion takes place on June 9 at the GLs Association, Whale Island, mustering at 1200. Our association is made up of those who served on the Cruiser and the Type 42 Destroyer and new members are always welcome. For more information and membership details contact John Parker at [info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk) or tel: 023 9252 1222.

SEPTEMBER 2012  
 Castle Class Corvette/Frigate Association: Annual reunion September 21 to 24 at Tillington Hall, Stafford. On the Saturday we will be dedicating at the National Memorial Arboretum our new memorial to all the Castle-class corvettes/ frigates of the Royal Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Norwegian Navy 1943-1961 and to those ships converted to Rescue and Ocean Weather Ships. To join the Association and/or obtain further details please contact the Secretary Mike Biffen at [wrekin160830@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:wrekin160830@blueyonder.co.uk) or tel: 0121 429 3895.

JULY 2012  
 Royal Marines Signals and Telecommunications Bi-annual Reunion 2012: The Sigs and Tels specialisations will be holding its biannual 2012 reunion at the SNCO's Mess, CTCRM, on Saturday July 14 2012. This is open to all ranks of both specialisations. If you were/are a serving member and would like to attend, or would like further information, please contact CIS Trg Coy Clerk (Miss Sheila Wells) on 01392 414397 or email [CTCRM-SW-CISTC-REGISTRY@mod.uk](mailto:CTCRM-SW-CISTC-REGISTRY@mod.uk). Alternatively please call Signals Specialisation Adviser (WO1 Lee Carr RM) on 01392 414089 or email [CTCRM-LDGR-SIG-WO1@mod.uk](mailto:CTCRM-LDGR-SIG-WO1@mod.uk).

OCTOBER 2012  
 HMS Tartar Association: Annual Reunion at the Cophorne Hotel, Plymouth from October 5 to 6. For further details please contact Linda at [linpowe@btinternet.com](mailto:linpowe@btinternet.com) or tel: 07866 928496.

NOVEMBER 2012  
 HMS Albion 1962-64 Commission: The next reunion takes place on November 3 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Portsmouth. It will be 50 years to the day that Albion sailed for the Far East. Seeking shipmates from that commission, Ken Richardson, David Burton and Tony Hington. It would be great to meet up at this special reunion. Contact Pete Childe at 3 Heath Road, Deepcar, Sheffield S36 2QG or 01142 887769.

## Contact sheet

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Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, [www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers)

RN Community: [www.royalnavy.mod.uk/community](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/community)

Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info)

RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, [navysearhpgprc@tnt.co.uk](mailto:navysearhpgprc@tnt.co.uk)

Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk)

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, [www.rnrmc.org.uk](http://www.rnrmc.org.uk)

RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), [www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)

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Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in March's Noticeboard must be received by **February 10**

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● Music by candlelight at the Stonehaven annual mess dinner

## Candlelit dinner for Stonehaven

WITH cadets and staff alike looking forward to the annual Stonehaven and District unit mess dinner, nothing was going to get in the way – certainly not a spell of inclement weather...

The unit was joined by Area Officer Cdr Mark Buchan-Steele, from MOD Caledonia in Rosyth, as their VIP.

Other top-table guests included unit chaplain Rev David Stewart, former Officer-in-Charge Lt (SCC) Morag Reid RNR and Cadet Mess president POC Michael Blacklaw.

The dinner followed all the traditions of the Royal Navy wardroom, including all the formalities such as being piped into dinner, various graces and toasts and the *National Anthem* to toast the Queen, followed by speeches and musical entertainment from various cadets and juniors.

Unit committee members and staff prepared and served the meal to the cadets and juniors as a thank-you for all their exceptional efforts during a highly-successful 2011.

The dinner was unique as more than half of it was conducted, as it would have been on HMS Victory, under candlelight.

Because of the extreme conditions experienced north of the border, Stonehaven suffered a power cut which included the unit's headquarters.

Undeterred, the show went ahead with a three-course meal, speeches and musical displays which were largely unaffected by the loss of power.

The unit had earlier welcomed the Lord Lieutenant of Kincardineshire, Mrs Carol Kinghorn, to Stonehaven to present the cadets with their 2011 efficiency burgee.

Having once more impressed assessors, TS Carron picked up its 41st burgee in its 57 year history – and continued an unbroken string of successes stretching back to 1982.

Efficiency burgees are awarded to the top 25 per cent of units in each area, while the next 50 per cent are eligible for efficiency pennants.

## Alan works through ten Olympic sports

ALAN Lawrence is a civilian instructor with Worthing unit.

He is also getting first-hand experience of ten sports, some of which are completely new to him – and all in aid of the unit.

Alan took up the Gold Challenge, which meant participating in ten Olympic sports both to raise money for charity and to encourage wider participation in sport.

His list – slightly amended since he started in mid-2011 – covers swimming, canoeing, boxing, weightlifting, running, the triathlon, rowing, sailing, cycling and judo.

And while aiming to complete all ten by the end of this Olympic year, Alan has already achieved the first five, and raised over £500 of his £600 charity target.

Some of the sports presented a particular challenge.

In his blog ([goldchallenge.blogspot.com](http://goldchallenge.blogspot.com)) Alan points out that swimming, for example, was not a strong point – his wife

2011 ENDED on a high note for Northampton and Wellingborough when the unit was awarded the Captain's Cup in the Canada Trophy competition.

Originally called the Commodore's Cup and first presented by Cdre Parker, Commodore Sea Cadets from 1996-2004, in 1997, it is awarded to the unit which has not won either of the top two awards but has nevertheless made a particular impression on the Captain Sea Cadets, currently Capt Mark Windsor.

POC Lara Jolley has also

won the National Award for outstanding leadership with the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Offshore Training, the Commander Brown Award.

But the trophy haul did not end there.

The unit also took the Ben Line Cup for the best cadet training participation and the Sir Gilbert Stephenson Trophy for achieving 92 per cent efficiency in the previous inspection year, which puts them in the top six units nationally.

These trophies were presented to the unit by Capt Windsor at the Eastern Area Conference.

Northampton's CO, Lt (SCC)

Chris Read RNR, said the awards were "an outstanding achievement for our unit and the District of Northamptonshire and Leicestershire units who won the Navy League trophy for being the best district."

In the run-up to Christmas the unit provided shoe boxes filled with gifts which were sent to the families of troops in Afghanistan in care homes over Christmas.

PO (SCC) Sue Telford was the brains behind the operation, and working in partnership with the local community and cadets she managed to fill 20 such boxes.

These were sent to SSAFA homes which support the families

of Service personnel – and the unit also raised £120 towards the cause.

Cadets enjoyed an end-of-year weekend which combined serious fun with some serious sport.

Some 30 youngsters wobbled round Milton Keynes ice rink, not all achieving a measure of grace and style but all enjoying the sight of staff braving the open ice.

Also concentrating on keeping their balance were the unit's two girls' teams which competed in the regional finals of the five-a-side football competition at RAF Cranwell.

In a thrilling final against Hertfordshire junior girls, Northampton's finest were only beaten in a sudden-death penalty shoot-out after the match finished deadlocked at 2-2 after extra time.

The final competition of the year was the Northamptonshire and Leicestershire drill competition, hosted by Leicester unit.

The piping teams and an armed drill squad won places in the Eastern regional finals.

It will also be the third year that POC Joseph Barley has represented the county at the Area competition, and he hopes to improve on the 12th place nationally he achieved in 2011.

December saw the launch of a major funding appeal.

The current shower and toilet block is too small for the membership of around 100 cadets, so to give more people the chance to try windsurfing, canoeing and sailing, the unit is aiming to expand these facilities and add extra storage space for boats and kit.

The facilities are used by cadets on at least three evenings a week, plus weekends, and local schools also come in through the RYA OnBoard programme.

See <http://localgiving.com/charity/northamptonssc> for more details.

The unit saw out 2011 with their annual carol service at Duke Street church and a traditional Christmas dinner enjoyed by almost 90 youngsters – and served, as tradition demands, by staff – followed by a disco.



## William is best of Brilliant

WILLIAM Greenwood-Spicer has been declared the winner of the Cadet of the Year trophy by Tunbridge Wells unit.

The cadet (pictured above with his prize) lives some 15 miles from the unit's HQ, TS Brilliant, but the award of the trophy reflected the fact that William still managed to attend all events involving the unit.

Those awarding the trophy noted that William is always well turned out, polite and keen to become involved.

One such example was his participation in the group which visited the Menin Gate at Ypres in Belgium.

William traced his great-grandfather's time in France in World War 1 in the Machine Gun Corps, which brought the whole experience of the Western Front alive.

He was one of 50 cadets vying for this prize.

## Ready to sail

CADETS and staff at the Peterhead unit have been getting stuck in to some serious maintenance in preparation for the 2012 boating season.

The unit's large fleet of 15 boats needs to be ready for the Easter boating course which kick-starts the activity.

Staff and cadets have been busy sanding, varnishing, polishing and cleaning the boats.



● Pictured at the signing of the MOU on board HMS Victory are, from left., Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor, Capt Colin Welborn, Capt Nigel Palmer, Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, Martin Coles and Rear Admiral Chris Hockley

Picture: LA(Phot) Jason Ballard

## Good sign for the Corps

THE Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MOD and the Marine Society Sea Cadets (MSSC) – the parent body of the Sea Cadet Corps – has been re-signed by senior figures from both organisations.

In a demonstration of support for and confidence in the Corps, the Navy's top personnel officer, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, convened a gathering in the Great Cabin of HMS Victory to put pen to paper.

Those also present at the signing were MSSC Chief Executive Martin Coles, Captain Sea Cadets

Capt Mark Windsor, MSSC Chairman Capt Nigel Palmer, Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland Rear Admiral Chris Hockley and Capt Colin Welborne, Chief of Staff (Youth) in the Royal Navy.

The MOD expects that the

operating standards maintained within the Corps will be sufficiently high to present the customs, traditions, culture and uniforms of the Royal Navy in the best possible light and contribute significantly to its standing in the eyes of the general public.

## MP visits Gosport unit

LOCAL MP Caroline Dinenage called in at TS Hornet, HQ of Gosport unit, for their annual awards ceremony.

The politician spent an hour with cadets and staff at their home in the Royal Clarence Marina – an appointment to support the youngsters which she said was not only a very important part of her duties but also a personal pleasure.

After being met formally by the Unit CO, Lt (SCC) Hilary Gilbert-Jones RNR and unit management committee chairman Lt Cdr (SCC) Ivor Feist RNR (Rtd), Caroline inspected the cadets and took part in Ceremonial Colours.

On completion she presented the cadets with their awards:

**Enrolled Cadets:** Best Progressed Enrolled Cadet: AC Joe Jacobs

**Pulling Award:** LC Jessica Varndell

**Kayaking Trophy:** AC Bethany Fieldsend

**General Boat Handling:** AC Andrew Rich

**Seamanship Award:** AC Andrew Rich

**Adventurous Training Award:** Cadet Penny Tribe

**Shooting Award:** Cadet Rachel Sherman

**Drill and Ceremonial Award:** OC Ben Jakes

**Sports Trophy:** Cadet Jack Jacobs



● MP Caroline Dinenage with Gosport unit's winning cadets

**Commanding Officer's Award:** AC Joe Jacobs

**1st Lieutenant's Award:** Cadet Ben Barry

**Training Officer's Award:** AC Andrew Rich

**Endeavour Trophy:** Cadet James-Harvey Kirwan

**Concord Award for Piping:**

Cadet Ben Barry

**RNA Pipe of Achievement:** OC Saavik Killeen

**Cadet of the Year:** LC Jessica Varndell

**Junior Sea Cadets:** Attendance Trophy: Junior Cadet First Class Amy Varndell

**Most Progressed Cadet**

**Award:** Junior Cadet First Class Amy Varndell

**Sports Award:** Junior Cadet First Class Harry Salmon

**Participation Award:** Junior Cadet Sebastian Frasle

**Officer-in-Charge of Juniors' Award:** Junior Cadet First Class Harry Salmon.





# Winning unit bids farewell to Simmy

BECCLES unit said farewell to one of its long-standing members.

S/Lt (SCC) Simmy Sadler RNR was given gifts and cards from the ship's company on her last parade night at the Suffolk unit before she moved to Huddersfield to be with her partner.

Simmy originally joined Beccles as a cadet, achieving the rate of petty officer cadet before moving on to become a staff member.

With a short break in service, Simmy has gone on to become a qualified rowing coach, piping examiner and seamanship instructor, devoting many hundreds of hours teaching and training cadets.

She is currently the Girls Nautical Training Corps National Piper, and up until the point she left she was the Principal of Beccles' RYA Centre.

The unit also had reason to celebrate the latter part of 2011.

In October Beccles was presented with the East Anglia District Cup, awarded to the best of the seven units in the group.

They were then handed their annual efficiency award from the area office, which manages more than 60 units across the East of England.

Awarded to the best units in the area,

Beccles was pleased to discover that they had been ranked third overall.

In November the CO, Lt Cdr (SCC) Joe Meadows RNR, was presented with the Peter Bayliss trophy at the Eastern Area conference, a prize given to the unit with the best training organisation.

Lt Cdr Meadows said: "These awards go to prove that the massive amount of effort that the cadets, staff and committee put into the unit really pay off."

"To be awarded such high accolades gives a massive boost to the team and we have set our sights even higher for 2012."



● OC Sian Cummins and twin sister Cdt Kelly Cummins

## Second Cummins on parade

WHENEVER the uniformed youth organisations of London get together for ceremonial events there is always the chance that spectators might end up seeing double.

Take the Remembrance Sunday parade at Kennington Park in November.

OC Sian Cummins, of Southwark unit, took her place in the ranks of Sea Cadets, not far from her twin sister, Cadet Kelly Cummins, of 75 Detachment Army Cadet Force.

The twins have their inter-cadet service rivalry between them – but it doesn't end there, because the twins' older sister, Zoe Cummins was on parade with her Air Training Corps squadron at the National Remembrance parade at the Cenotaph.

It was by no means the first time the Cummins siblings have paraded together.

At the 2011 national Talfaralgar Day parade in the shadow of Nelson's Column, Sian fell in with the London Area Sea Cadet platoon and Zoe paraded with the ATC platoon.

## Light activity

JUNIOR cadets from Swansea unit paid a visit to Light Vessel 91.

The lightship, moored as a museum ship in Swansea, finished her working life at Helwick in the Bristol Channel, just off Worm's Head.

## Officer wins award for half-century

LAST year the Captain Sea Cadets, Capt Mark Windsor, announced a new award to reward those who had served 50 years as adult volunteers in the Sea Cadets – and an officer from Yorkshire has become one of the first to receive the award.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Allen Dixon RNR (above) joined Rotherham unit as a boy in December 1947, progressing through the ranks to Instructor Cadet and representing the Corps at the Queen's Coronation in 1953.

After National Service, in 1956 he returned to Rotherham as a chief petty officer, and on February 24 1970, was appointed CO of TS Rother.

Lt Dixon was instrumental in the re-affiliation of the town and the unit with Polaris submarine HMS Repulse, a story that made the papers and led to the unit becoming TS Repulse.

A promoted Lt Cdr Dixon was appointed District Officer (DO) for South Yorkshire, and in 1984 made Sea Cadet history by appointing the first female Assistant District Officer (ADO).

As all the units in South Yorkshire are inland, at least 50 miles from the sea, he decided to run an Easter Camp in Portsmouth in 1986, and the hugely-successful camps continue on HMS Bristol to this day.

Allen stood down as DO in 1996 but continued as ADO until 2000 when he took on the role of District Training Officer.

Other duties during his time in Cadets include acting as Executive Officer for drill competitions and regattas at area and national level, and chairman of Area Officer selection boards.

Since 1961 he has run all parades in Rotherham, keeping the Corps firmly in the public eye.

Lt Cdr Dixon was presented with his Captain's Medal at the Eastern Area Conference by Capt Windsor.



## Telford hope to raise roof

BACK in September we told you about how the cadets of Telford were keen to raise a fair bit of money to tackle overheads.

And that is overheads in the literal sense – the roof has been leaking for years, but water ingress into classrooms and the heads has become a major problem.

Surveys showed that repairs will not be sufficient; a new roof is required, but the unit has been unsuccessful in applying for grants.

So in addition to normal unit

running costs, the cadets and staff of Telford are hoping to raise enough money to replace the roof of their HQ, allowing them to then go on to repair the interior.

And one new initiative embraced by TS Wrekin is 'Just Text Giving' from Vodafone – a simple way of making a donation by texting the word WREK40 and an amount to 70070 – therefore to donate £10 you would text WREK40 £10 to 70070 – as illustrated by the Telford cadets in the picture.

A MEMORIAL service to a Pearly King who was also a staunch supporter of the Sea Cadets is to be held in Essex in April.

Larry Golding, who died in July last year, was the Pearly King of the Old Kent Road, and a former Sea Cadet who went on to join the Royal Navy in World War 2 and served in the Fleet Air Arm.

Rotherhithe-born Larry went on to work as a London cab driver, and more recently he and his wife Doreen organised the annual London's Pearly Kings and Queens Costermongers' Harvest Festival event.

Doreen – the Pearly Queen of the Old Kent Road and Bow Bells – continues to organise the late September event, and at the 2011 festival a cheque for £300 was presented to a representative of the West Ham unit by the London's Pearly Kings and Queens Society.

A large contingent of cadets from West Ham, and a group from Southwark unit, attended the festival, which started in the yard of the Guildhall in the City of London when a parade formed up and continued at the church of St Mary le Bow in Cheapside.

In her opening speech, Alderman Sheriff Fiona Woolf paid tribute to Larry, who was renowned in the East End and beyond as an active fundraiser.

## Cyber Corps

DON'T forget you can follow the Sea Cadets on Facebook.

Go to [www.facebook.com/SeaCadetsUK](http://www.facebook.com/SeaCadetsUK) to get a flavour of what is happening across the Corps.



● The Pearly Queen of the Old Kent Road and Bow Bells, Doreen Golding, with Sea Cadets from West Ham and Southwark units at last year's London's Pearly Kings and Queens Costermongers' Harvest Festival

Also in attendance at the festival was LC Oliver Field, the Mayor of Swale's Cadet from Sittingbourne and Milton unit, who accompanied Cllr Ben Stokes and the Mayoress, Cllr Sylvia Bennett, at the festival.

Although the London Royal Naval Reserve unit HMS President was unable to be

represented, the former chairman of the HMS Glory Association, S/M Gerald Evans, along with association secretary S/M Patrick Williams and standard bearer S/M Julian Wylie did attend – one of Larry's squadrons, 806 NAS, was based on board HMS Glory in the mid-1940s.

The memorial service to Larry

will be held on Sunday April 22 at the Waltham Abbey Jewish Cemetery, Skillett Hill, Honey Lane in Waltham Abbey, starting at 4.30pm, and afterwards at the Village Hall, Wanstead Place, High Street, Wanstead.

This year's Harvest Festival will take place in London on Sunday September 30.

## Certificate marks a milestone

THE Eastern Area Staff Officer for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Lt Cdr (SCC) Malcolm Grant RNR, has successfully completed all requirements for the City and Guilds Graduateship in Youth Management and Training.

The officer was presented with his certificate of attendance by Admiral Lord West of Spithead, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of CVQO.

Malcolm said: "Completing the Cadet Vocational Qualification is a challenging achievement for anyone and a worthy cause."

"To be awarded the graduateship has again proved to myself I have taken a big, responsible step to further develop myself."

"I have been in the Cadet Corps for some 30 years now and gained a vast amount of knowledge as well as life skills."

"These skills and knowledge have given me much confidence to do many roles whilst being an instructor and officer within the Corps."

"I recommend CVQO 'Real Learning Real Benefits'."

"As an adult volunteer within the cadet force doing the graduateship, it has enabled me to reflect on what I have got out of volunteering and what benefit I have been able to give."



● Proud City of Liverpool cadets display the unit's unbroken record of 14 Burgees, with Junior Cadets Faye Cassin and Michael O'Connor holding the newly-awarded 2011 burgee

## 14 in a row for Liverpool

CITY of Liverpool cadets are celebrating another impressive unit review for 2011 – and the 14th year in succession that they have been judged amongst the best in the business.

The review resulted in yet another efficiency award – represented by a burgee – landing on their doorstep, putting them in the top 25 per cent of units.

Which means that the good people of TS Mersey have achieved the highest level of efficiency possible by a Sea Cadet unit since 1998.

Commanding Officer S/Lt (SCC) Jake Orr RNR said: "This is a momentous occasion for TS Mersey

and Liverpool District.

"These awards are a testament to the local youth, that they have the ability to achieve success year on year."

"Achieving a burgee standard is difficult to achieve as it is – to do it 14 times in a row, it takes a lot of hard work and effort."

TS Mersey are now looking forward to their next milestone, which is the Juniors Section celebrating ten years, and the coming year will prove busy in other respects – the unit will not only be celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee but its own 70th birthday.



## Reward for Alan's efforts

A SENIOR rate has received a meritorious award for his efforts at New Romney and District unit.

At a ceremony held at the Ashford International Hotel the Officer in Charge, Acting CPO (SCC) Alan Bell, was presented with his award by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Philip Sidney, 2nd Viscount De L'Isle.

Following a distinguished Army career Alan worked in local government and joined the Corps in 2004.

He became chairman of the Parents and Supporters Association the same year, and in 2005 he joined the staff as a petty officer, becoming First Lieutenant in 2006.

Since November 2007 he has been Officer in Charge with the rank of Acting Chief Petty Officer.

With the cadets Alan has attended many multi-training courses and achieved a number of qualifications, including becoming District Communications Officer for East Kent.

He encourages and guides cadets in a wide variety of activities, always attending outside events with them and taking groups for their monthly boating weekends at Lydd Army Camp.

Unit chairman Lt Cdr (SCC) Davies RNR (Rtd), congratulated Alan, saying: "This well-deserved award recognises Alan's leadership at TS Veteran, where he has worked tirelessly to increase and maintain the numbers of cadets, reaching 40 at one stage."

"He is a highly-respected and motivating individual and commands the full respect and backing of all the management committee, staff and cadets."

## Raise it yourself

CADETS from Norwich unit have been helping raise money for a children's cancer charity.

Youngsters braved the cold of a December morning to join staff at the Sprowston branch of Homebase in collecting money for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

As well as touting collection buckets, cadets helped pack bags and sold raffle tickets to customers.

The unit believes it helped raise more than £500, and has been thanked by the organisers at Homebase, Amanda Churcher, Jodie Day and store manager Rob West.



● Cadets from Jersey unit on Sea Sunday church parade

# Jersey out in force to mark Sea Sunday

WHILE there is generally a great deal of activity throughout the year, there has been a number of recent special events which reflect the diverse range of involvement by the youngsters of Jersey unit.

The first was the service and march past at St Peter's Parish Hall to commemorate Sea Sunday.

The whole unit attended and, having conducted an interesting sermon by involving the cadets themselves in the message contained in his lesson, the Padre – the Rev Martin Poolton – then took the salute.

Alongside him was the chairman of the Unit Management Committee, Peter Grainger.

The subsequent march-past was led by the Commanding Officer,

Lt Cdr (SCC) Rob Davison RNR.

In addition to formal parades and noticeably the annual attendance at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday – at which the cadets always excel themselves both in appearance and presentation – the unit provides Guards of Honour at official functions and always maintains a presence at the highly-successful Jersey Boat Show.

The most recent event was the presentation of a cheque to the Jersey Teenage Cancer Trust for the sum of £2,066.

This impressive total was raised by the cadets and other volunteers of the Trust pulling a field gun around the entire island in 12 relay teams, calling at every parish en route.

The cheque was received by

former cadet Bryan Williamson, who recalled his own time at the unit.

In receiving the cheque Bryan emphasised to the ships company that "the effort of the cadets in raising this wonderful sum is greatly appreciated by the Trust,

and everyone involved can be assured that the money will be put to very good use."

TS Jersey is the best unit in the Southern Area for the fifth year in a row for cadets participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

## Christmas boxing days

CADETS from Cardiff unit once again provided Christmas cheer for deployed troops in Afghanistan by filling shoeboxes with gifts.

Coordinated by PO (SCC) Allison Ward, cadets packed some 88kg of goodies such as toiletries, comics, nutty, powdered drinks, decorations and novelty items into shoeboxes, wrapped them in festive paper and posted them to Bdr David Goode of 47 Field Regt RA, who organised the distribution at the receiving end.

TS Cardiff has a great empathy with UK

Servicemen and women on deployment as a number of former members of the unit, including David, are currently serving on the front line in various hotspots around the world.

Allison said: "We know from letters of thanks we've received on previous occasions that these Christmas boxes are appreciated by the troops who receive them."

"It's only a relatively small thing that we do, but it lets them know that their families and friends at home are thinking of them at this time of year."

## Buxton win bank community award

BUXTON unit is celebrating a windfall from a bank's community programme.

In July last year NatWest launched the CommunityForce, a new initiative to help support local charities, organisations and groups to raise publicity for their

work and attract volunteers.

The programme also provided the opportunity for three groups in each of the bank's 131 CommunityForce areas to win awards of £6,275 each.

Organisations and charities applied for awards during the summer and an online public vote took place to decide which three organisations in each area would receive the awards.

Buxton unit, based at the Cadet Centre, Silverlands, were chosen to receive one of those £6,275 cheques.

Over 5,000 eligible charities and community projects in England and Wales applied to take part in CommunityForce and over 360,000 votes were cast.

Buxton needed the award to finalise their fundraising efforts to build an extension to the unit, allowing building work to start.

The new extension will provide a safe environment in which all the youngsters can learn vital life skills in a friendly and well-resourced setting.

By applying for the awards, local charities and projects became part of an online network giving them greater visibility and the opportunity to attract volunteers from the area.



● Sea Cadets in Trinity 500 boats go through a rehearsal for the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant

Picture: Lt (SCC) David Bradbury RNR

## Trial run for pageant flotilla

SEA Cadets will play their part in one of the pivotal events celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in the summer.

And some of those youngsters were put through their paces early in the New Year when a number of units took part in a 'dry run' for their role in the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant, which takes place in London at high water on the afternoon of Sunday June 3.

The current plan is that more than 50 of

the Corps' Trinity 500 boats will take up a diamond formation ahead of the Royal Barge, each carrying a flag of a Commonwealth nation.

For the rehearsal 15 Trinity dinghies took to the water alongside Putney unit; on the big day the boats will run from Wandsworth Bridge to Tower Bridge.

Around 60 cadets from units across the region, including Rickmansworth,

Southwark, Rugby, Eastbourne, Tewksbury, Maidenhead, Bedford, Gravesend, Hertford and Ware and Oxford, manoeuvred the craft with skill and dexterity, impressing Port of London Authority officials and MP Jim Fitzpatrick, who were watching from a launch nearby.

The final selection of units to take part and form part of the pageant flotilla, which could number 1,000 boats, is currently under way.



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## See the Navy in reel time

**SPITHEAD and other Royal Navy Fleet Reviews 1914-1939** (*Strike Force Entertainment*, £11.99) has dug out some rare footage and often long-forgotten newsreels for this 75-minute collection.

Given the age of the footage, the quality of some of the imagery is sometimes rather grainy.

That doesn't detract, however, from an otherwise fascinating anthology.

Eleven reviews (but one extra) feature. There's the fortuitously-timely 1914 gathering (which includes some excellent shots of then-flagship HMS Iron Duke at sea) and the post-war mustering of 50 or so ships at Southend in 1919 to mark the victory in WW1 (not, strictly speaking, a Fleet Review, but a 'Peace Sea Pageant' apparently...) where a rather awkward-looking fledgling aircraft carrier HMS Furious took her place in the line for the first time; in addition, many of the battleships present had small launch ramps built on their turrets to launch Sopwith aircraft.

Come the 'talkie era' and we have (a) some suitably bombastic music from the Royal Marines and (b) some first-rate Chelmsford-Warner commentary (although, sadly, the rambling Thomas Woodroffe of 'the Fleet's lit up' fame doesn't put in an appearance).

One extra included here – a Gaumont excerpt from March 1939 highlighting manoeuvres in the Med – is a rather tubthumping news item promising the Royal Navy could smite allcomers (which isn't exactly what Admiralty staff were saying privately...).

The commentator rather overdoes himself in praise of the castles of steel: "In a world gone mad, their rock-like sanity, the emblem of security, a guarantee of peace to the Empire and the world..."

The pictures don't necessarily match the words, for while the battleships are impressive, the sight of Ark Royal's deck crammed with biplanes (Swordfish and Hawker Nimrod fighters – 1933 vintage; HMS Glorious hadn't even been re-equipped with the new Sea Gladiator...) probably didn't leave Tojo, Hitler and Mussolini quaking in their boots.

Fast-forward 14 years and the newsreel tone is rather more measured as the Queen takes the salute at the 1953 Coronation Fleet Review.

If you want a demonstration of the sea change in 20th Century naval power, the '53 review is a pretty good place to start.

Gone are the battleships, save Vanguard; carriers are the new capital ships. And the newsreel spends as much time focusing on the destroyers and frigates which were now the backbone of the Fleet.

As for the mission, no longer a challenge to foes around the globe but "keeping our trade routes open" – not entirely dissimilar from the present-day role of the Fleet...

■ We have three copies of the DVD to give away thanks to Strike Force.

To win, tell us the name of the ship which stood in for the Royal Yacht at the 1953 Coronation Review.

Answers to Spithead Review Competition, Navy News, Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH, or e-mail [spithead@navynews.co.uk](mailto:spithead@navynews.co.uk).

Entries must be received by mid-day on Monday March 12 2012 and the normal competition rules apply.

**BETWEEN** May 28 and June 1 1794, the main fleets of the two sides met in battle for the only time in the long war between the British Empire and Revolutionary, and later Napoleonic France.

None of Nelson's victories was such a clash: Trafalgar was an out of area engagement of the two sides' Mediterranean Fleets, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

The result in 1794 was a hard-fought victory for Vice Admiral Earl Richard Howe's British fleet. No Royal Navy ships were taken but six French ships were captured and a seventh sunk, the latter an unusual and unwelcome feature of a battle at this time when prize money was still a major interest of all on the winning side.

More important, perhaps, were the casualties among seamen. Around 1,100 were killed on the British side. The French lost 4,200 killed and 3,300 wounded, ten per cent of France's entire stock of seamen, the vital mechanism of the ships of the day. Many hundreds of captured French crew were taken to languish in British prisons.

The effect of the loss of so many of those sailors who had manned the French ships which had created American independence only a few years before, set the scene for the badly-handled enemy fleets with which Nelson was to take such liberties.

No wonder the culminating day of the 1794 battle was deemed 'Glorious', especially as there was no convenient headland to give the battle a name.

Nevertheless the French could, and did, claim some success. Their fleet had immolated itself to allow the passage of a truly vital grain convoy upon which the survival of

the new Republic depended. This, quite literally, saved the heads of Admiral Villaret de Joyeuse and his political commissar Jeanbon Saint Andre.

This was the era of the Revolution at its murderous worst, with Robespierre supreme in Paris with his delusions of a new religion fed by totalitarian blood lust. The grotesqueness of this regime was reflected in the picaresque names of the French republic's blood-red-painted ships of the line: Juste Jacobin, Convention and two of my special favourites, Tyrannicide and Vengeur du Peuple. The latter sank after an intense battle with HMS Brunswick, perhaps the hardest-ever fight of the age of sail with guns being fired through closed gun ports, so closely were the ships engaged.

The whole affair and its background has been brilliantly described and analysed by Dr Sam Willis in the third of his 'Hearts of Oak' trilogy, **The Glorious First of June: Fleet Battle in the Reign of Terror** (*Quercus*, £25 ISBN 978-1-84916-038-4)

Despite serious illness which has interfered with his work Dr Willis has produced another truly fine book, perhaps the best yet. He has successfully exploited the work of artist Nicholas Pocock who was on board a frigate supporting the battle fleet to provide one of the clearest and best illustrated accounts of a sailing battle that has ever appeared. Dr Willis' remarkable understanding of the dynamics of such an action, coupled with his ability to write well, provides

## THE GROVE REVIEW

exceptionally-clear and readable description and analysis. There is no better or more empathetic description of the problems of fighting a late 18th-Century fleet action than that found here.

His approach is also laudably individualistic. Usefully, he casts doubt on some of the common generalisations of the existing accounts this period such as the French always shooting at the rigging and the British at the hulls, the supposed intensity of gun drill in British ships and the assumed superiority of experience of the British crews. Nonetheless, he does stress, if not fully account for, the remarkable ability of British ships to inflict highly disproportionate damage on their opponents.

Most interestingly, the author's account vindicates the Royal Navy's fixation with cleanliness and good health. Bringing on board large numbers of prisoners meant that British ships soon began to suffer seriously from the disease that so often reduced the efficiency of their enemies. Nearly half the fleet was affected by typhus and 800 British sailors had to be sent to the hospital at Haslar. Thanks to treatment there, only 40 died but the fleet's effectiveness was seriously affected for the rest of the year. In this indirect and backhanded fashion, the French were able to claim another success.

The battle is put against the political background of the time and Dr Willis does a good job of describing the complexities of French revolutionary politics in the era of the Terror. Among the



# The spirit of the Ark

**HMS Ark Royal: Zeal Does Not Rest 1981-2011** (*Maritime Books*, £29.99 ISBN 1-904459-46-3) from former crew member Lt Cdr Alistair Graham and historian Eric Grove charts the career of the Mighty Ark from her birth in the Cold War to her premature demise in the new age of austerity.

We should, of course, add a disclaimer: our guest reviewer is one of the authors and the *Navy News* archives were used extensively in the writing of this volume.

But you can't write a book purely based on *Navy News* cuttings (well, apart from *Navy in the News* and *More Navy in the News*...). Indeed, the authors have been granted access to a lot of official and unofficial material from documents and reports to the personal diaries of former commanding officers.

The result is a book which not only tells the story of the Ark, but is as much a story of the Royal Navy's achievements over the past three decades.

Two conflicts – neither of which she was intended for when designed in the '70s – dominate the history of Ark: the Balkan wars of the mid-90s and the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

With the focal point of the past decade being the Middle East and Suez, the Navy's Adriatic mission is largely forgotten by the general public. It was a long and demanding campaign – Ark's captain at the time, Terry Loughran, characterised it as "80 per cent at sea, 20 per cent in harbour".

And while, unlike Iraq ten years later, there was no threat to the ship herself, Ark's pilots were in harm's way. Lt Nick Richardson was shot down over Bosnia by Serb forces – he survived and was subsequently rescued (an incident which inspired a Hollywood film, *Behind Enemy Lines*... which didn't

feature any British involvement...).

The downing of Lt Richardson's Harrier also presaged the 24-hour media age. A local doctor watched the Harrier explode – and called it in to the local radio, while global TV news channel CNN had the story within ten minutes.

Ten years later – and following several years mothballed in Portsmouth – the carrier once again found herself in the glare of publicity.

Firstly, she was the setting for what proved to be the very last public engagement by the Queen Mother. At the age of 101, her appearance aboard understandably drew international press coverage (her death the following spring was, says Ark's then captain David Snelson, "a personal loss because she had meant so much to us").

Secondly, the ship's long-standing and much-loved patron visited a ship in a changed world.

Ark Royal emerged from her enforced lay-up in the summer of 2001. Events in the USA that September triggered a slow chain reaction which bind the carrier's name with another conflict: Iraq.

The chapter on Operation Telic is probably the best in the book, offering fresh insights into the invasion, its commanders and the challenges faced – senior officers sailed with a "nearly blank sheet of paper" when it came to the execution of the invasion; in the finest traditions of the RN they formed a "close-knit Band of Brothers" to iron out every problem.

This single-mindedness wasn't always shared by Whitehall – Ark's ship's company didn't always reflect kindly to interference from above. It was, observed Capt Alan Massey, "difficult to stop your

people from panic [*sic*], when your upper echelons are apparently paralysed by it".

Ark acted as a helicopter carrier for the assault on the Al Faw peninsula. She took no Harriers with her, something Capt Massey regarded as a mistake. The jump jets, he reflected, "would have made a big difference" to the attack by the Royal Marines.

Harriers would not have prevented the low point of Telic – and perhaps Ark's entire career: the loss of two 'Bagger' Sea Kings which collided on the second day of the war. It was, says Capt Massey, a "shattering, unimaginably awful blow".

Ark and the Baggers would recover; the helicopters would go on to play a key role, alongside Fleet Air Arm Lynx, in engaging enemy tanks outside Basra.

By contrast, the carrier's post-Iraq career seems rather anti-climactic: exercises, refits, revamps. It also proved to be a controversial and turbulent period.

There was the unpopular decision to axe the Sea Harrier, wrangles with the RAF, and financial crises which almost curbed her career in 2008 – let alone in 2010.

The closing chapter makes for uncomfortable reading – not least because Ark Royal herself is still extant, here in Portsmouth Naval base, her fate undecided, and the argument over axing carriers and Harriers still rumbles on.

The ship's future was evidently decided over a weekend. On Friday October 15 2010 she was part of the future Navy. Come Monday, she was gone. The RAF axed the Harriers. With no Harriers, the Navy didn't need a

many useful appendices is one that explains the quirks of the French Revolutionary calendar. To the enemy the battle was fought on 9-13 Prairial and was called *La Bataille Prairial* – the name that is on the memorial in the Pantheon in Paris to the brave (but defeated) crew of the Vengeur.

The author also discusses the cultural and artistic background to the action and its representation. The well-produced colour illustrations include some fine reproductions of the relevant paintings whose provenance is fully and interestingly described in the text.

Perhaps because of the author's unfortunate health difficulties, a number of small errors have crept in which have passed by both him and his publisher's copy editors. In his opening discussion of monuments he says that those buried in Westminster Abbey include Sir Francis Drake and Sir Winston Churchill. Drake famously lies at the bottom of the Caribbean and Churchill in Bladon churchyard near Blenheim.

The author has some sympathy for the positive ideological side of the French Revolution, which is fair enough, but I would quibble with his use of the word 'humanitarian' to describe that ideology. 'Democratic' or 'egalitarian' would be better descriptors, which would make the transition to bloody terror a little easier to understand.

These are, however, only very minor quibbles with an absorbing, interesting and important book. It should be read by everyone interested not only in the sailing period but in the overall history of the Royal Navy.

It is one of the most important contributions to naval historiography of 2011 and is very highly recommended.

Harrier carrier.

"There was a sharp intake of breath and quite a few damp eyes I remember," said Capt Jerry Kyd when he recalled telling his men and women their ship would be axed.

"My message was that whatever was going to happen, Ark Royal – the Fleet's flagship – would go out with dignity."

And with a bang, not a whimper. "There was little sentiment within Fleet Headquarters for a farewell tour by their flagship," the authors write. Ark carried it out anyway.

Thousands turned out in Arctic conditions in Newcastle, the city of her birth, to see the carrier. So too 3,000 Hamburgers, the final foreign port of call. It was more like hundreds in Portsmouth for the final entry – but it was one of the coldest, iciest December days in the Solent in decades.

Lavishly illustrated with black and white and colour imagery (although, lamentably, a handful of the images have not reproduced well), this is a book worthy of the ship.

It balances the operational side of Ark with the human element with input not just from captains past but also aircrew and ordinary seamen.

All the carrier's commanding officers were also asked to write a précis of their tenure.

All stress the importance of the 'spirit of the Ark', the morale, attitude, fortitude of the thousands of men, and later, women, who served aboard the carrier.

John Clink, the ship's penultimate CO, had "650 people committed to making Ark Royal a success" under his charge.

"There is something very special about this great ship and, most of all, her wonderful people."

"All who wear an Ark Royal cap tally are caught up by the passion and pride that has endured through the last 25 years."



## Heads you win

IN 2009 David Pulvertaft published his first book on the subject of Naval figureheads dealing mainly with the collection held in the National Museum of the RN at Portsmouth, some 36 carvings in all.

In his new book, **Figureheads of the Royal Navy** (*Seaforth*, £30 ISBN 978-1848321014), he has been able to open up and expand the subject to cover the full and fascinating story of Britain's naval figureheads – a heritage of carvings of almost 600 years from the reign of Henry VIII to the last days of the 19th Century, writes figurehead historian Richard Hunter.

Several chapters follow their development, with a vast amount of new and fascinating material much of which is published for the first time.

This flow of detailed information is complemented by a wealth of original and until now unpublished pictorial references, keeping the reader mesmerized with their sheer quality and scope, resisting the use of 'stock' photographs showing well-known and much published carvings.

He has left it to readers to go to see surviving carvings for themselves *in situ*.

What he has found however are wonderful and evocative early black and white photographs from the late 19th Century onwards showing lost carvings and collections, offering us a unique opportunity to see something of the past.

Each page has a wealth of such imagery, although by far the most important reference material in this book are the countless number of original carvers' drawings and sketches, found in the National Archives at Kew.

These depict figureheads which have long been lost, ranging from the ridiculous – a full-length Kangaroo from HMS Kangaroo of 1852 – to the sublime, a magnificent three-quarter figurehead of Queen Victoria in all her glory for HMS Majestic of 1851; both designs came from the well-known Hellyer family of carvers.

The book ends with a comprehensive directory of survivors and reference details of more than 800 figureheads – the first time such a register has been attempted.

This is the first book to concentrate purely on Naval figureheads, the research is meticulous, and a great deal of thought has gone into its design and layout.

This will be the classic reference work on the subject for years to come. Indeed, it's difficult to imagine how this book could be improved.

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# Olympia dreams and a hunt triumph

ON A high after his wings graduation from Sixty (R) Squadron, the RN's Lt Stephen Currie found himself looking forward to the sporting highlight of his life so far: The Olympia London International Horse Show.

The show is a major event in the showjumping calendar. It is considered by many in the sport to be one of the best indoor shows in the world – and upholds this reputation with the calibre of horses and riders attending.

Lt Currie quickly settled his horse, Curolea Bobi (aka Bobby) into his surroundings. After a good night's sleep for both, they were up early the next morning to exercise in the arena at 7am.

Acclimatisation complete, it was a chilled-out forenoon until the rest of the competitors arrived.

By this stage Chantelle Siddle and Nicky of Siddle Equine Services had arrived and with their help Bobi was groomed and tacked ready for the competition at 5.45pm.

Lt Currie was seventh of eight Services competitors after the first round and perhaps feeling the pressure of fulfilling a lifelong dream, brought two fences down resulting in eight faults.

The second round was run in reverse-faults order, so the Naval pairing were second to go. A little more relaxed this time, both horse and rider jumped a foot-perfect clear round – but it wasn't fast enough to move up the rankings; the pair stayed in seventh place.

Wg Cdr Jane Austin was placed third for the RAF with the winner Capt Mark Avison HCMR for the third year in a row.

From third to seventh were joint on eight faults, with time being the deciding factor on placing.

Out of 16 rounds of jumping there were only five clears by four horses with Curolea Bobi being one of them.

Lt Currie said of the experience: "It was an absolutely fantastic experience. I was a little nervous in the first round and made the wrong decision to go for six instead of five strides between fences.

"Bobby jumped superbly in the second round and I'd decided that I wasn't going to push for a fast time and go for a steady clear. Mainly to enjoy the experience of the arena and jumping in front of a full house!"

No showjumping round-up would be complete without an appearance from Lt Sharon Brown and Gromit. Both were in action at the Cotswold Hunt National Team Chase, held at Foxcote Manor Andoversford alongside other RN riders.

Team chasing is not for the faint-hearted. The event is run over cross-country terrain with fixed fences and a team of four riders must navigate the course together.

The team time is recorded when all are over the finishing line, although only three count so losing one horse/rider during the course is not a show stopper.

The event is popular in the hunting community and raises the curtain on the season. The main prize for Service riders is the Military Cup contested over two miles of countryside with over 20 solid objects/jumps to negotiate.

Apart from Portsmouth-based Sharon and Gromit, the rest of

the RN team was drawn from Culdrose, including Lt Richard Walker, CPO(ACMN) Mark Shaw and PO Scott Clackworthy.

All three of the Culdrose riders were experienced hunters and were buzzing at the thought of taking on the challenging Cotswold countryside.

The long journey for the Cornwall contingent required stabling the night before and after the event to re-charge the horse power and provide recovery time.

Everything sorted out, the team assembled at Andoversford ready for all the thrills and potential spills that team chasing can bring.

Team captain Lt Brown, a veteran of this event, led the riders through the course walk.

Team chasing requires the careful planning of four horses manoeuvring together all the way round the course. That plan often changes during the race depending on progress; tired and strong horses can lose position and fallen horses and riders are more common than the team would wish to dwell.

Jumping 3ft-plus stone walls and hedges at a fast canter and sometimes gallop, is not for the faint-hearted rider – or horse for that matter.

With the walk complete, Lt Brown took charge of the team warm-up for horses and riders and prepared the team for what was ahead.

The team set off at a blistering pace set by Lt Brown and her trusty mount, tailed by Lt Walker, PO Clackworthy and CPO Shaw.

Fences came and went with cries of 'yeeha' and 'yahoo' heard as the team flew round the course.

Lt Brown and Gromit maintained position as lead horse/rider but the Culdrose flyers changed positions as horses became stronger – or more tired – and to ensure all obstacles were safely and successfully navigated.

The course included a challenging water ditch, a large drop fence and some tricky jumping in and out of heavy wooded areas.

After 20-plus fences the finish was in sight with the team still together jumping obstacles side-by-side. Crossing the line together within a few lengths of each other was an immensely-satisfying feeling of achievement and pure teamwork.

The sailors knew they were quick – but just how quick? The RN had never won the Military Team Chase Cup before there was obvious anticipation of the result.

And the Navy riders were not disappointed – coming in first and clear, 30 seconds faster than the second-placed RAF team.

A fantastic result for the Senior Service with commendable performances, especially from Scott Clackworthy on his debut and CPO Shaw on a horse he had only bought a couple of months before the event.

All riders were presented with a red rosette and a bottle of port before proudly lifting the cup.

RN SENIORS vs MIDDLESEX

BUOYED by successes against London FA and the AFA, the RN Seniors trotted out for their third Southern Counties league fixture of the season against Middlesex FA.

Captained by Sgt Fowler (CTCRM) and welcoming Havant and Waterlooville player, AB Leon Cashman (Edinburgh), back from deployment, the Navy faced immediate pressure.

Middlesex's left midfielder flashed a cross right through the penalty box – fortunately it rolled out for a goal kick. The Navy's sluggish start was energised after ten minutes when a corner from LPT Foxhall (Collingwood) found AB Cashman's head, only for the header to be cleared.

The following ten-minute spell saw some industrious work from LPT Young (JSU Northwood). From his right midfield 'berth' he caused the Middlesex defence considerable problems.

The RN were establishing a foothold and in the 20th minute a long looping ball found Cashman who volleyed dramatically into the side netting. Five minutes later, the impressive Young had a strike saved by the Middlesex keeper.

While the Navy continued to dominate the remainder of the half, they created no further clear-cut chances and the teams went in level at the break.

Young started the second half as he had finished the first. After a mazy run, he created space to establish a one-on-one with the keeper, only to slip the ball just wide of the post.

Over the next ten minutes Middlesex remained defiant creating three chances, one of which brought a fine save from LPT Matt Shortt (Excellent).

Twenty minutes into the second half another superbly-delivered corner by LPT Foxhall reached the head of the veteran CPO Phil Archbald (Dauntless) whose effort was saved at the far post.

About a minute later the industrious Mne 'Katie' Tunstall (CLR) had a powerful shot cleared off the line. Sharp reactions from striker Mne Mickey Husbands saw the rebound returned with interest to put the RN into a well-deserved lead.

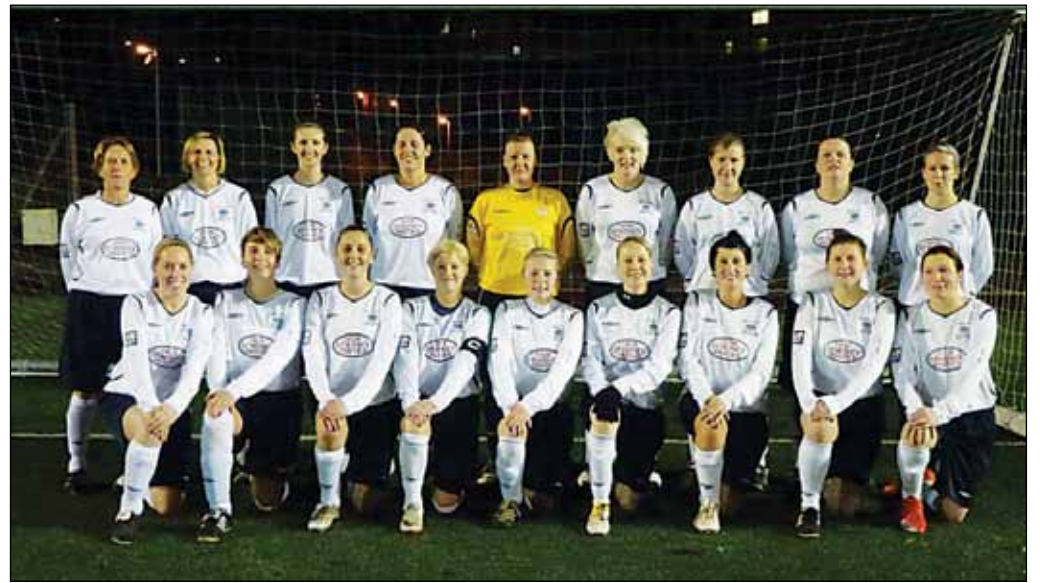
Middlesex continued to threaten and could have scored from a cross which flashed across the RN penalty box only for the Middlesex striker to head the ball straight into the arms of Shortt.

Five minutes from time, impressive wing play from Young created an opportunity for Tunstall, who despatched the ball past the Middlesex keeper to secure the points and a worthy 2-0 win.

RN SENIORS vs SUSSEX FA

With three wins under their belt, the seniors headed to Lancing FC for the Southern Counties Cup fixture against Sussex FA.

With only five minutes on the clock, a Sussex snapshot hit the RN crossbar, delivering a timely reminder to the Navy side that



● They were smiling at the end too... The RN Ladies pose ahead of their 5-0 demolition of Torpoint



## ONSIDE with Lt Cdr Neil Hordwood, RNFA

all teams pose a threat in this tournament.

An immediate counter-attack was launched when a deep cross by AB Cashman was headed just wide by LPT Young.

In the early stages of the game the key partnerships of Mne Husbands and CPO Sweeny Todd (JSU Northwood) up front and the left-sided partnership of LPT Foxhall and Cashman, were starting to blossom.

Indeed, a precise ball played by Foxhall was thundered into the side netting by Cashman 11 minutes into the first half.

A quiet period followed before Young got beyond his full back and cut the ball back to Archbald, whose powerful shot was saved.

In the 33rd minute, an intelligent piece of play between AB Cashman and CPO Todd delivered the ball to the ever-dangerous Mickey Husbands. He crossed from left to right before powering a shot just wide.

In the last minute of the first half, a counter attack from Sussex saw their striker through on goal only to be thwarted by a superb stretching tackle from centre-half LAET Tom Ardley (702 NAS).

The first ten minutes of the second half saw a period of dominance from Sussex. Their number 11, Oatway, son of Brighton FC's assistant manager, was a constant threat.

Eight minutes into the second half he floated effortlessly across the RN penalty box from right to left and curled a delightful shot just wide of LPT Shortt's post.

Not long after, the influential centre-half Mne Scott Sampson (40 Cdo) had to leave the pitch through injury. He was replaced by LPT McCevoy (HMS Dragon), a promotee from the U23s.

Fifteen minutes into the second period, a Sussex midfielder cut inside and delivered an unstoppable shot into the right

hand corner of the RN net.

With the Navy side not really establishing any period of dominance in the second half so far, Sussex scored again in the 75th minute. Again, movement across the RN penalty box allowed Sussex to shoot unchallenged into the net.

This was uncharted territory for the RN seniors this season. They responded – a long ball from Shortt found LAET Jamie Thirkle (Culdrose) who delivered to the feet of Cashman. He thundered in with only a few minutes remaining – too late for an equaliser; the game ended 2-1 to Sussex.

RN LADIES vs TORPOINT LADIES

With the Pompey Fun Bus full and in great spirits the RN Ladies travelled to HMS Drake for their first fixture in the West Country in several seasons.

A few squad members returned from sea offering the management team more options, particularly in attack.

A new starting position on the right wing for AB(WS) Lisa Fraser worked well from the outset and saw her linking with Logs(CH) Helen Kingscott at right back and LPT Nat Bavister in midfield.

The team settled quickly and were dominating possession through accurate passing. A great attack started in the heart of defence with POPT Lisa Farthing and AB(WS) Nat 'Pat Butcher' Collier through the centre to Bavister who delivered the ball wide to Lisa Fraser.

She got the better of her marker and put a great ball into the box for Bex Waller to head home, only for it to be disallowed. The RN had the bit between their teeth and forced a number of corners. Despite some great deliveries from AB(Sea) Jenny Dick, the dominance looked like it was not going to be rewarded as the Torpoint defence did their job.

The deadlock was finally broken on 43 minutes with Waller taking a great strike which the keeper could not keep out.

One change was made at half time: Lisa Farthing came off in a straight swap with RPO Mitch Garrett in the heart of defence.

The RN continued to assert their dominance immediately after the break, with the team camped in Torpoint's half.

A short corner taken quickly from the left turned into a scramble in the penalty area. The ball landed at Collier's feet and, taking a touch on the turn, she put the ball in the back of the net, leaving the keeper stranded.

Despite being two to the good, the RN continued to chase a bigger scoreline and following a good pass-and-move throughout the team, LPT Lucy McKenna delivered a killer ball into the box for Waller to finish in style off her knee – not unlike Peter Crouch! They all count!

McKenna got her reward for her constant support play on the wing. A great ball from Dick allowed her to take a shot from just inside the 18-yard box which went past the keeper and put the RN 4-0 up.

Waller finished off a great individual performance with the final goal of the night giving her a hat-trick and the team a 5-0 win.

This was an excellent result for the ladies and just what they needed after the disappointment of the last few matches.

The defence were solid throughout and the midfield linked well allowing the Navy to dominate possession. A highlight was Fraser starting in an unfamiliar position; she performed like she had been playing there for years.

Across all the representative sides there's a great deal of promise of success for the remainder of the season – particularly in the hard-fought Inter-Service matches which are just round the corner. These include:

February 21: RN U23 vs Army U23, Victory Stadium (2pm)  
March 1: RN Ladies vs RAF Ladies, Victory Stadium (2pm)  
March 7: RN Seniors vs RAF Seniors, Fratton Park (7.30pm)

## Cash for swimming coaches

BURSARIES of up to £1,000 are available to sailors and Royal Marines who've left – or are in the process of leaving – the Service and want to become swimming coaches.

The Swimming Trust has set aside £5,000 in their latest round of bursaries to help ex-Forces personnel become qualified swimming, water polo, diving or synchronised swimming coaches/teachers.

The bursaries and awards are being awarded on a competitive basis – applicants must demonstrate that they

- have a background in competitive swimming, water polo, diving, synchronised swimming, or have been involved in physical training and education, or currently volunteer with a swimming club or youth group;
- left the Services during 2011 or are planning to leave before July 2012.

Particular consideration will be given to those who demonstrate a commitment to aquatics and who are interested in developing a career in the leisure or health sectors.

For details, contact Brian DeVal, the trust's honorary secretary, at [secretary.swimmingtrust@swimming.org](mailto:secretary.swimmingtrust@swimming.org) or write to 39 Belle Vue Court, Belle Vue Gardens, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 0AN.

# 50 most definitely not out

IF YOU could capture 50 years of Royal Navy cricket in one photograph...

Senior officials from the sport headed to Hampshire cricket's home, the Rose Bowl, on an unseasonably fine winter's day to celebrate half a century's service by three secretaries of the Royal Navy Cricket Club (Lt Cdr 'Jim' Danks on the left, Capt Derek Oakley RM in the centre and Lt Cdr David Cooke on the right) as well as Capt Mike Beardall (second left) taking over from Cdre John Fulford (second right) as chairman of the RNCC.

Elsewhere in the world of naval leather upon willow, even though it's a good couple of months before the 2012 season gets under

way, the RNCC is holding winter coaching sessions at Dummer indoor school of cricketing excellence (near Basingstoke) on February 8 and February 22 (both between 1 and 5pm), March 14 (9am-4pm) and April 25 and 26 (9am-4pm).

There will be a number of coaches available for these sessions which are open to players of all abilities who hope to turn out for their unit, command, RN U25s, ladies or full representative teams. Recreational travel has been approved in accordance with 2011DIN10-045.

Anyone interested should call Lt John Stephenson on 07919396032 or email [DES.BATCIS-RM-Maritime](mailto:DES.BATCIS-RM-Maritime).





## Plymouth put to the sword

THE 2012 Rugby Union Inter-Command tournament began in perfect playing conditions at HMS Temeraire with Plymouth Command seeking a winning start to the competition – something which has eluded them in the past couple of years.

It would need a Herculean effort and would have produced one of the biggest upsets in the tournament against a Fleet Air Arm side packed with capped Navy players, some of the best Navy U23 talent and also some quality players from Rugby League, writes Lt Cdr Geraint Ashton Jones.

The outcome of the match was determined quite early on. With the Fleet Air Arm dominating the tackle area and also pressurising the Plymouth side whenever they had the ball the Oggies were simply unable to keep hold of possession for long enough to pose any real problems to the men of Naval Air.

Tries from Seahawk's NAs Ben Priddey and LAET Ryan Cox, two from NA George Quarnivalu and Mne Sean Houghton gave the Fleet Air Arm a 27-0 lead at half time.

The airmen remained relentless in their quest for a comprehensive opening victory and they were able to match their first half achievements with five more tries after the break.

A second score for Houghton was matched by a second for Priddey. Replacement No.8, AET Ben Madagan (845 NAS) touched down following a strong drive at a five-metre scrummage before fullback Lt Andy Vance (HMS Sultan) scored from distance.

The final score went to fly-half and man of the match AET Jon Humphries (845 NAS) who also converted all the second-half tries to bring his personal tally to 17 points and the final score to 0-62.

Plymouth will no doubt take heart from how they finished the game. Although they didn't manage to cross the FAA's line, they did exert a lot of pressure through a number of close drives from their hard-working forwards and influential scrum-half LPT Sion Jenkins (HMS Drake).

The Fleet Air Arm meanwhile are through to the semi-finals.

With the form showed in this encounter none of these teams will relish the match; they are clearly in the mood to regain the trophy from the Royal Marines.

## Hannah sets the benchmark

Continued from page 44

A number of other records also fell, so please check the Facebook page and website for the latest records. ([www.royalnavypowerlifting.co.uk](http://www.royalnavypowerlifting.co.uk) or Royal Navy Powerlifting Association on Facebook).

Mne Sam Dew was the star of the day, having recently won the 75kg class at the world championships, he won the 82.5kg class and best male lifter with a total of 585kg setting four new Navy records in the process.

Best female lifter went to Helen Barnsley-Parsons, who put in a stellar performance on her first powerlifting competition, clearly showing her athletic pedigree (she was once a GB team gymnast).

The day was well attended with a large Royal Marines' team from CTCRM which did very well, and athletes from as far away as Faslane travelling down to compete.

RNPA coach Sean Cole was also on hand to provide tips to the lifters and the area BDFPA representative, Paul Rees, also attended.

He observed that in a few years' time, the RNPA could well supply the bulk of a national team – high praise indeed.

The trophies were presented by Collingwood's CO Cdre Tim Lowe, who afterwards was treated to a demonstration by some of the class winners (he not surprisingly declined the opportunity to attempt a lift himself).

# Royals too strong for RN

THE annual RN-Royal Marines ice hockey fixture for once faced off at a sensible hour (1pm instead of 10.30...).

The Royals had taken the title back in 2010, but with support on home 'turf' at Gosport ice rink from sailors based at nearby Sultan, the RN were out for revenge, writes Lt Adam Lappin.

The Marines started the game at an impressively high pace and soon took the lead with a goal from Mne J Denver (30 Cdo).

A quick-fire double seven minutes into the first period helped to give the Royals a commanding initial lead over the sailors.

After this early wake-up call and a few tasty hits along the boards, the RN got on the scoreboard with Kev Cave finishing a well-worked move round the Marines' defensive pair.

The Royals countered four minutes from the end of the first period with another quick-fire double against the RN's rookie goalkeeper AB A Blackshaw (HMS York).

With the RN reeling from the onslaught dished out by the Royals it was time for another inspirational move by the RN first line which resulted in Cave scoring his and the sailors' second of the game.

The first period ended with the RM leading 5-2 and the RN going back to the tactics board in the dressing room!

With stern words delivered by the Navy's coaches the sailors re-emerged on to the ice with a new-found vigour and a desire to overturn the deficit.

It turned out to be a good rollocking as the sailors scored 30 seconds into the second period with the commandos seemingly still in the dressing room.

This was followed three minutes

later with a second for the RN as Lt Adam Lappin (Nelson) got on the end of a shot from the point to deflect the puck past the marines' goalie.

AB M Dugard (HMS Kent) thought he had scored his first goal for the RNIHA with a good shot from distance only to see it deflected in off the shorts of another player and hit the back of the net. The goal still stood but Dugard was denied the recognition.

The RM hardly had a sniff in the second period and the teams went back to the changing rooms with the score at 5-5.

The ice had been cut (resurfaced) and the rink was all set for the start of the third, decisive period with the scores all-square.

The game was very evenly balanced five minutes into this period but then the RM captain, Cpl J Underwood (Raleigh) made a break from defence to drive into the RN half and prove why he is at NMT with sniper-esque accuracy, putting the puck over the shoulder of the RN goalie.

This was the rallying call for the Booties as they went on to dominate the period; Mne S Rowlands notably scored his second of the game to help the RM triumph with a final score of 9-5.

There's a chance for the the RN to gain retribution in the Navy Cup next month; it's an all-day event on March 2 at the Gosport rink.

At a more leisurely pace, the Planet Ice Arena in Gosport was also the venue for HMS Sultan's grass roots hockey session.

Two dozen sailors – all on the leading engineer technician's course – volunteered for the session with four members of the RNIHA team acting as instructors, giving the rookies a taste of the fast-moving sport.



● ET(WE) Shaughnessy bears down on the Royal Marines' goal during the green berets' hard-fought win over the RN at Gosport



## More net gains in Gosport

SULTAN ladies became double netball champions as the 2011 term drew to a close – adding the Mixed Eastern Region and Eastern Region Winter League titles to their name.

The Mixed Eastern (pictured above) took place at HMS Collingwood and saw Sultan, Nelson and Westminster competing with the home team. The championships were run on a league basis with every team playing each other once – so three games apiece.

Sultan won all their matches quite comfortably – 11-3, 13-1 and 7-3, which meant they topped the table ahead of Nelson, Collingwood and finally the Type 23.

Next up, just a few days before Christmas, the Gosport establishments hosted their final Eastern Regional match against near-rivals Collingwood.

The ladies trounced their Fareham foe 20-3 – a victory which sealed the league title.

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## If you see Sid, applaud him

...WHICH will probably mean nothing to anyone aged under 35...

Anyway, there's a new trophy for RN's 'Mr Skeleton Bobsleigh' – better known as PO(D) Sid Lawrence: the Meritorious Service Medal.

Sid, currently serving as a diving officers' course instructor at the Defence Diving School on Horsea Island in Portsmouth, has been singled out for two decades' commitment to military, national and international winter sports.

For the uninitiated, skeleton involves racing head-first down an ice track, typically with around 14 turns.

Your chin will be just three inches off the ground – and you'll reach speeds up to 80mph – not a sport for the faint-hearted.

After starting his career in winter sports in 1994, Sid took first place in the Great Britain Novice Skeleton Bobsled championships.

He then went on to compete extremely successfully at all levels, including captaining the Great Britain team for two years – leading to a fourth-place finish in the 1998 World Cup.

Sid formed the first Royal Navy Skeleton Bobsled team and for the past nine years has single-handedly been its manager and coach. Under his leadership, the team have taken four first places at Inter-Service competitions.

Sid's dedication, loyalty and effectiveness in coaching is recognised at an international level which has seen him coach team Great Britain, Japan, Australia, Canada and the United States in both skeleton and at the Cresta run.

In 2009/10, he was on the coaching team which led to Team GB winning gold at the Vancouver Winter Olympics.

That same year he was also named RN Sports Official of the Year for his outstanding leadership of the Navy skeleton team.

The MSM rewards those who have at least 20 years' non-commissioned 'good, faithful, valuable and meritorious service, with conduct judged to be irreproachable'.

As for Sid's team, they're in action next month at the Inter-Services, staged once again at Igls in Austria.

Meanwhile, Sid's fellow divers Lt Gregg Powell and AB(D) Mark Elson, both from the Defence Diving School, represented the RN against the other Services at the German National Sliding Centre, Winterburg.

Following their recruitment to the RN skeleton team, both men swapped rubber for Lycra and embarked on Exercise Racing Ice, an arduous Army-led training week with vigorous professional tuition from international coaches in all aspects of the sport.

After theory briefs and sled set-ups, the training began from the halfway point before gradually progressing up to the top of the track.

By day four, both men were practising running starts and hitting speeds of 70mph through the notorious 'Labyrinth' at turn 13.

Lt Powell and AB(D) Elson successfully completed the training week which had a 50 per cent drop-out rate due to voluntary withdrawal and have subsequently earned a place in the RN team.

# A proper Hatchet job

**DIDN'T** we feature HMS Sultan's boxers on the back page clobbering the opposition just a couple of months ago?

Yes, yes we did. That was them trouncing the Crabs.

This time they trounced their local arch rivals, HMS Collingwood, writes POPT Daz 'The Hatchet' Hoare.

This is like Millwall v West Ham or Benn v Eubank. This was not going to be for the faint-hearted and would make the hairs on your neck stand on end.

First into the ring were Collingwood's AB Thomas and Sultan's AET Clayton.

Thomas started well, but could not find any openings through Clayton's peek-a-boo tactics.

Over the three rounds Clayton stuck to his tactic of hitting and not getting hit; landing shots to head and body. The Sultan man won on points with a well-polished performance.

Next up Portsmouth ABC's Josh Baldwin and ET(ME) Cooke. In his first bout, Cooke did not disappoint against an opponent with more experience. The Sultan fighter landed his shots in bursts.

In the second and third rounds Baldwin got his long range jab going to keep Cooke at bay and won on points – but Cooke can take great heart from this performance.

The third fight of the night saw Collingwood's AB Baker face up to the Gosport establishment's LAET Morris.

Morris – in his first bout after injury – started slowly, unable to land his big bombs.

In Baker he faced a brawler who was looking to blow his opponent away.

The Fareham puncher opened up, forcing Morris to receive a count. Morris tried to get into the contest with body shots but again was forced back by Baker who was very gritty and determined.

With the second count came the end of the fight; the referee stopped proceedings.

Dan Yardy (Portsmouth ABC) climbed into the ring to face Sultan's AET Smee.

Smee's plan was to counter Yardy from the off – the civvy was more experienced and a 'come-forward' boxer.

The sailor used this plan, always moving, which slowed Yardy down. In the first round the Portsmouth fighter did catch up with Smee with a little burst giving him a standing eight count.

In the second, Smee had a bit of success but Yardy stepped up the pressure a little – enough to warrant a second count and the fight's end.

In a re-run of the Eastern Championships semi-final, Sultan's 'Maz' Maliszewski and Collingwood's AB Ochwat delivered a repeat performance as Maz once again showed all his ring craft and skill.

The number of punches Maliszewski was throwing and landing was a testament to all the hard work he had put into his training.

In all three rounds he kept his opponent at bay with left-rights followed by left hooks to the head and body. Winning the bout on points, he will be one to watch at the RN Cup.

Representing Brighton City ABC, Rikki Pycroft took on Sultan's AET Thomas.

The sailor started very strongly, landing his big shots and giving Pycroft a standing eight count.

The Sussex fighter weathered the storm and

came back into it in the second round.

Over the next couple of rounds Thomas gave everything, landing great shots and always troubling Pycroft. He deserved his points win.

ET(ME) Gilchrist's bout against AB Ryan of HMS Dauntless was his first – yet the Sultan boxer never looked out of his depth.

In a good opening round, both fighters landed some big blows – with Ryan taking the edge forcing Gilchrist into a count.

In the second round, Gilchrist got into range and landed some powerful blows which stunned Ryan who for the first time started to keep his hands up.

In the final round, Ryan boxed to his strengths using his rear hand with force, earning Gilchrist another count. In the end Ryan won on points but Gilchrist can take a great deal from this debut.

Both AB Brookes (Collingwood) and Sultan's ETME Gary Bain knew each other from sparring sessions.

In the opener, both men landed jabs but it was Bain who was landing five or six-punch bursts that kept catching Brookes, knocking his head back, and earning him two standing eight counts.

In the second, there was no let-up; Bain really pushed for a stoppage, landing at will when in close, throwing straight shots and uppercuts. He forced another two eight counts and the referee halted the contest.

Bain's now won all three of his fights for Sultan – he's definitely one to watch and should progress into the Royal Navy squad.

The penultimate fight – Portsmouth ABC's Yannick Foh versus Sultan's LAET Connell – was the contest of the night, spread over four two-minute rounds.

Foh started well knocking down Connell – more off balance than the power of the shot.

During the second and third rounds both fighters were landing blows to the head and body but by the end of the third Foh started to tire slightly.

Thanks to months of training, Connell's fitness was evident in the final round as he increased the pressure landing shot after shot to Foh's head and body.

Despite taking such punishment, the Pompey fighter managed to see out the fourth round.

The score went to the judges and – by the closest of margins – Foh won a majority decision.

A fantastic bout with both boxers giving their all. Connell has come on so much this year and boxed brilliantly in his seventh bout this season.

The night's proceedings closed with Collingwood's AB Button challenging LET Tritschler of Sultan, who was looking for his first win of the season.

Tritschler fought and moved confidently displaying his best of the season.

Button tried to get into the fight, but every time he got close Tritschler would hit and move winning the first two rounds at a canter.

In the final round, Tritschler kept up the pace forcing combinations home and although Button struck back with a flurry in the last 20 seconds, showing great heart, the final decision went to the Sultan man.

On the night Sultan won 4-1 and were crowned champions, snatching the trophy from Collingwood who'd held it since 2006.

● *Take that... Sultan's Gary Bain delivers a heavy blow to Collingwood's AB Brookes*

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, HMS Sultan



## Chris closes in on his Olympic goal

ROYAL Marine Chris Sherrington is a step closer to representing his nation in **judo** at the 2012 Olympics after the performance of a lifetime half-way around the world.

The green beret joined GB squad teammates at the Judo World Cup event in Samoa – one of the main qualifying contests for this year's Olympics and Chris's best previous result had been seventh place.

After a difficult 2010 due to injury Chris (pictured above in white grappling an opponent) was returning to hopefully secure his spot as Great Britain's No.1 heavyweight.

Following victories in the preliminaries against fighters from Guam and Australia Chris met the formidable Chinese player Hao Wang, then Thormodur Jonsson of Iceland in the final.

There Chris produced the performance of his lifetime – and claimed the best result of his career as he won his first World Cup gold medal.

He's now in Japan preparing for his next event and hopeful selection for the Olympics.

Chris' GB duties meant he was absent from the RN judo championships at HMS Temeraire. Results were as follows:

**Lightweight:** gold Mne Francis (40 Cdo), silver TSM Cairns (HMS Turbulent)

**Middleweight:** gold CPO Watson (HMS Sultan), silver LPT Davey (HMS Raleigh), bronze AB Simpson (HMS Collingwood) and Cpl Bennett (CTCRM)

**Heavyweight:** gold PO Barnham (HMS Neptune), silver PO Perry (HMS Raleigh)

**Kyu grade open:** gold Cpl Bennett, silver PO Barnham, bronze WO2 Beauchamp (CTCRM) and PO Perry

More details on the sport from 4th Dan CPO Thacker, secretary RNJA, at [rnjudo@live.co.uk](mailto:rnjudo@live.co.uk).

## Hannah sets the benchmark

MALE and female **powerlifters** from across the Naval Service converged on HMS Collingwood for the RN single lifts/full power championships.

A large number of RN records fell – including all the Female 70kg class records to Helen Barnsley-Parsons, a first-time junior lifter!

Thomas Merriman broke the bench press record in the 90kg male class and Rob Cooper broke his own deadlift record in the 110kg class to win best deadlift with a monstrous 290kg.

Merriman was narrowly beaten in the overall 90kg class by Chris Martin, who has just returned from a tour alongside the marines in Afghanistan.

First-time lifter Martin Wright took both squat and bench press records in the 110kg class with a 215kg squat and a 160kg bench press.

The committee's female rep Lt Rachel Cunningham set two new records in the female 80kg class, which places her close to the national qualifying total.

☛ Continued on page 43

More than just a Game!

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# ‘Our worst nightmares’ The Channel Dash

CHRISTMAS 1941 brought little cheer to the warring nations of the Earth.

Germany was shaken to the core by her first defeat in front of Moscow. It cost her a quarter of a million men, many of her senior generals, and above all the Wehrmacht's aura of invincibility.

The Soviet Union could rejoice at throwing the Hun back from the gates of their capital – but her losses in six months of war in men, material and territory were grievous.

A European war was now a world war thanks to the actions of Japan.

Indeed as 1941 drew to a close, the *Shōwa* empire seemed to be the only one of the belligerents in the ascendancy. Under the banner of the rising sun, her forces swept across South-east Asia and the Pacific.

America was still reeling from the blow at Pearl Harbor – a blow compounded by numerous more: Guam, Wake Island, and most recently Manila had all been lost to Tokyo.

Nor did the British Empire have much to cheer. London's fortunes were rapidly approaching their nadir. Hong Kong had just fallen. Prince of Wales and Repulse were at the bottom of the South China Sea. The mother country's sea lanes were ravaged daily by U-boats and, less frequently, by German surface ships.

The only encouragement this third Christmas of the war came from the Western Desert, where the Eighth Army had eliminated the threat to Egypt and lifted the siege of Tobruk. It had, however, failed to destroy Rommel and his vaunted *Afrika Korps*.

In time, Winston Churchill promised members of the US Congress, gathered in the Capitol on Boxing Day, that the Commonwealth armies in North Africa would “beat the life out of the savage Nazi”.

In time, too, the British premier assured America's political leaders, the united nations would defeat the Axis powers – “a group of mighty foes who seek our ruin”. He continued:

**What kind of a people do they think we are? Is it possible that they do not realize that we shall never cease to persevere against them until they have been taught a lesson which they and the world will never forget?**

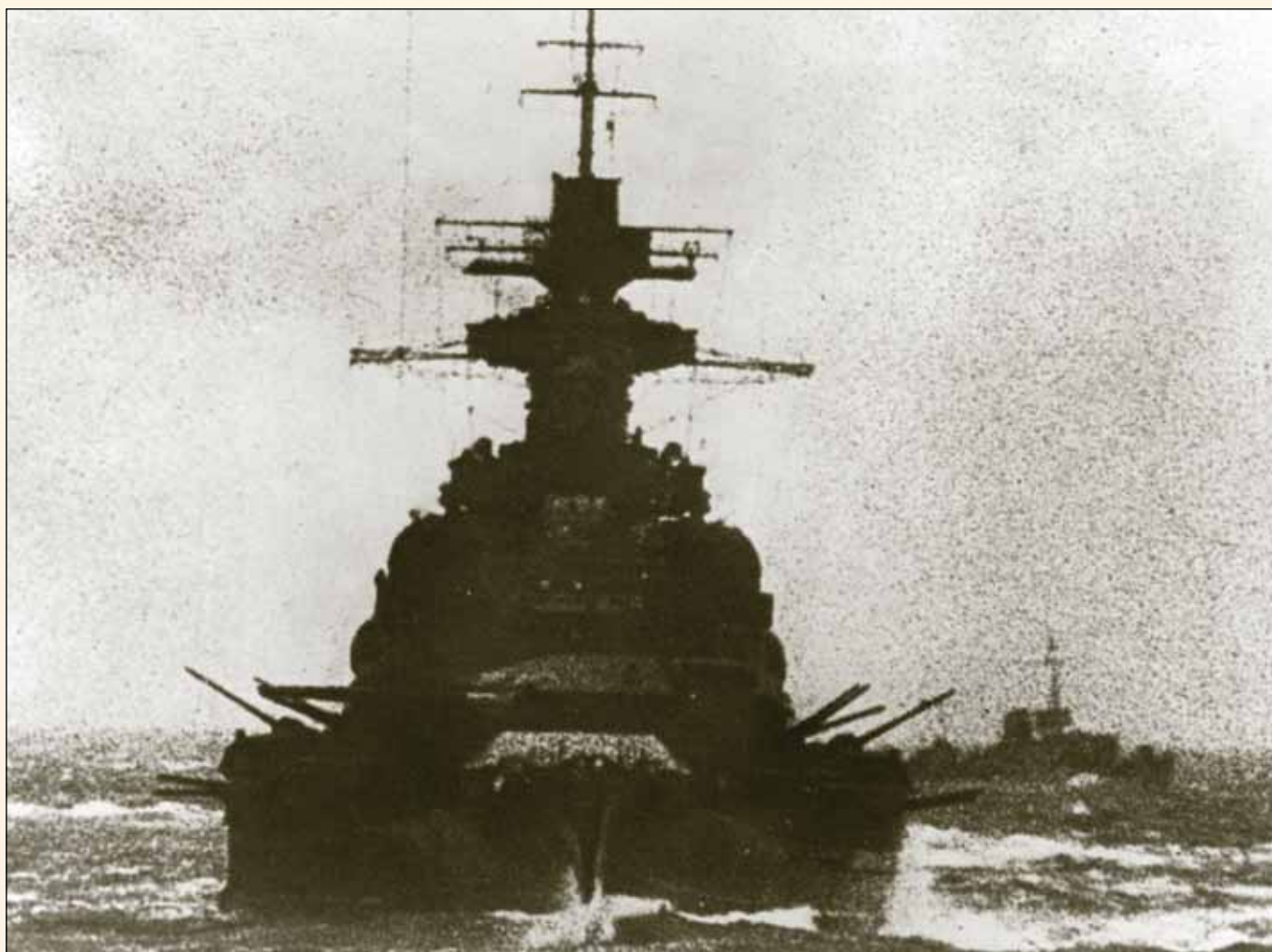
As Winston Churchill addressed the Capitol, 3,600 miles away a naval force of one cruiser, four destroyers and a couple of troop transporters, sailed into the North Sea night. For two days it had sheltered in the Shetlands, but as the Christmas storm abated, so the ships resumed their journey, bound for the small Norwegian island of Vaagsoy.

With nearly 600 commandos embarked, the force was charged with knocking out the isolated community's fish oil factories – used by the Germans to produce explosives – and engage and defeat any enemy troops they might encounter.

For 21 dead and three times as many wounded, the Vaagsoy raid – codenamed Operation Archery – succeeded. The small town of Måløy was left in flames, its factories and fish oil stores wrecked, its small German garrison mostly dead or captured.

The attack confirmed all of Adolf Hitler's suspicions. For months he had fretted about his Scandinavian possession and the Vaagsoy raid was clearly the precursor to a large-scale Allied attack on Norway.

And so Norway, he determined, needed defending. It needed the bulk of the German Fleet... but the bulk of the German Fleet was still in France.



● ‘Only those who accept the dangers deserve luck...’ *Scharnhorst*, escorted by a destroyer, leads Operation Cerberus, February 12 1942

Picture: Imperial War Museum

With its vast natural harbour – 70 square miles in all, formed by the convergence of three rivers – and easy access to the Atlantic via the narrow strait, the Goulet, the Breton city of Brest had been a vital naval base since the days of Cardinal Richelieu, home first to the *La Royale*, and later *Marine nationale*.

In the summer of 1940, came a new inhabitant: the *Kriegsmarine*, which regarded the port as its greatest prize when France fell to the seemingly-unstoppable German Army.

No longer did the great ships of the German Navy have to run the gauntlet of the North Sea between the Shetlands and Norway, or the Iceland Gap. From the Atlantic shores of France, they could strike at the supply lines of the British Empire.

Or at least that was how the leaders of the German Navy viewed the ports of France in the summer of 1940. The reality proved to be very different – for the German surface fleet especially.

Brest in particular became not a sanctuary for German warships escaping the clutches of the Royal Navy.

It was to Brest that the sisters *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* – the British determined the 38,000-ton leviathans with their nine 11in guns apiece were battle-cruisers, the Germans insisted they were *Schlachtschiffe*, battleships – had fled after a two-month-long sortie in early 1941.

It was for Brest that the damaged *Bismarck* made in May that year. The torpedo of one *Swordfish* bomber and the guns of the Home Fleet ensured she never got there – but her escorting heavy cruiser, *Prinz Eugen*, did reach Brittany.

As sanctuaries go, Brest proved to be a poor one. It was barely 120 miles from the shores of England – well within striking distance of the RAF.

Within eight days of their arrival in Brest, British bombers targeted the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*.

The Fleet Air Arm had already damaged *Gneisenau* as she returned from her sortie. Now the RAF compounded her agony. She was almost sunk by a torpedo strike which earned the pilot, Kenneth Campbell, a posthumous Victoria Cross. Yet more damage was inflicted on the wounded leviathan a few days later.

The *Scharnhorst* survived these raids unscathed – but she was hardly fit for sea, dogged by engineering problems which had hampered her sortie early in 1941 and continued to plague her.

It was July 1941 before *das glückhafte Schiff* – ‘the lucky ship’, a nickname applied not just to *Scharnhorst* but also the *Prinz Eugen* and the pocket battleship Admiral Scheer – was able to put to sea once more. After brief trials in the roadstead off Brest, she sailed 200 miles down the coast to La Pallice. Thanks to the French underground resistance, it took the RAF just a day to find her. Five bombs pierced her armoured deck, but only two exploded; the rest simply punched straight through the hull. She returned to Brest – shipping 7,000 tons of Atlantic seawater – and underwent four months of repairs.

By then the two sisters had been joined by a third heavy ship, the *Prinz Eugen*. She had sailed into the commercial port of Brest on the afternoon of June 1.

While the *Iron Cross* was presented to around one fifth of her ship's company, the 680ft ship was covered with camouflaged netting. She was spared the RAF's attention

for a month – until the small hours of July 2 when a bomb pierced her armoured deck and exploded deep inside, killing or fatally wounding 60 men and putting the cruiser out of action for three months.

While *Prinz Eugen* was repaired, many of the ship's company enjoyed leave. Some headed to Locquirec on the north Brittany coast for training as soldiers, others were sent on promotion courses. There were ceremonial days celebrating the deeds of the man for whom the ship was named, Prince Eugene of Savoy, the great 17th and 18th Century commander of the Habsburg armies, scourge of the French and Turks. There were more air raids – 21 sailors were wounded while rescuing Frenchmen buried alive during one attack on Brest – and other dangers in the city. Sailors came under attack from armed members of the French resistance, leading to a ban on officers leaving the ship without pistols. Welders set fire to the camouflage netting which shielded the cruiser from Allied aerial reconnaissance.

Elaborate nets were also spread over the two battle-cruisers – from the air they supposedly looked like clusters of trees – while the obsolete French cruiser *Jeanne d'Arc* was made to look like the *Scharnhorst*.

*Kriegsmarine* commanders determined the defence of Brest should be “as important as the defence of Wilhelmshaven”. The port was ringed by smoke generators and more than 1,300 anti-aircraft guns, while the naval base and docks were ingeniously camouflaged.

Such deception proved largely futile. Aerial photographs of Brest in the autumn of 1941 – more than 700 reconnaissance flights were flown – show the unmistakable outline of the two sisters in dry dock and the *Prinz Eugen* alongside a little further to the west.

Royal Air Force ‘visits’ to Brest were an almost daily – and nightly – occurrence. Roughly ten per cent of Bomber Command's effort was expended attacking the German warships in western France. The RAF made just shy of 300 attacks on the three heavy warships – at a cost of more than 40 aircraft and nearly 250 aircrew.

And yet despite the damage British bombs inflicted on the trio, the air attacks couldn't deliver the knockout blow. There were plans to throw 300 aircraft at Brest in a single night, a seemingly-endless wave of bombers raining high explosive on the ships.

There never was such a raid. Instead, the RAF persisted with its smaller-scale attacks on the French port, succeeding in damaging *Gneisenau* once again on January 6. The damage was relatively minor – a couple of compartments flooded. She would be ready to sail again on February 11.

By then the *Prinz Eugen* and *Scharnhorst* had also been repaired and were ready for duties. But where?

The answer was Norway. Long before commandos had struck at Vaagsoy, Adolf Hitler had been convinced the British would strike at Scandinavia.

To the German leader, Norway was a *Schicksalszone* – ‘zone of destiny’ – to be safeguarded at all costs. Germany had struck north in the spring of 1940 – at the insistence of the Navy, overlooking the small matter of Norwegian independence – to secure iron ore supplies through Narvik.

But in seizing Norway, the *Kriegsmarine* had sacrificed much of its surface fleet. It didn't have the forces to protect the 1,200-mile sea lane from Narvik to the North Sea coast of the Reich. It certainly didn't have sufficient forces to guard more

than 15,000 miles of Norwegian coastline. To prove the point British ships, submarines and aircraft were striking at German shipping off the Norwegian coast – if not at will, then certainly regularly.

The *Kriegsmarine*'s commander, Erich Raeder, and his fellow admirals shared Hitler's fears. Indeed, his commander in Norway, Admiral Hermann Boehm, went so far as to warn that Norway was a “pistol aimed at England's heart” – and they would do everything in their power to knock it out of Germany's hand, while his counterpart commanding the *Kriegsmarine*'s North Sea commander Admiral Rolf Carls warned that the Allies would strike inside the Arctic Circle around the beginning of April.

Such ‘threats’, plus the growing convoy traffic between Britain and the Soviet Union had already prompted Raeder to bolster his meagre forces in Norway; he would send the new battleship *Tirpitz* to Trondheim when she had completed her training.

That reinforcement wasn't enough for Adolf Hitler. “If the British do things properly, they'll attack northern Norway in several places,” he assured Raeder. There would be an “all-out assault” by the Royal Navy to seize Narvik which could be “of decisive importance for the outcome of the war”. The ‘threat’ to Norway demanded the “use of all the *Kriegsmarine*'s forces – all battleships and pocket battleships” and that meant transferring the three ships in Brest.

The ‘fleet in being’ at Brest served no purpose, Hitler argued. They were like a patient with cancer – “doomed without an operation”. The operation he proposed was a breakout through the Channel – based on past experience the English were “incapable of taking and carrying out lightning decisions”. It was a gamble, but he pointed out to his naval commander: “An operation, even if it's a drastic one, offers at least some hope of saving the patient's life.”

Erich Raeder did not balk at the idea of abandoning Brest – even he conceded that it was not a suitable base for his ships. But he did balk at the prospect of withdrawing his ships to home waters, for abandoning the Atlantic coast was tantamount to abandoning the war at sea – with the big ships at any rate.

But it went beyond simply abandoning the *guerre de course* for which he had built his fleet over the past 14 years. The loss of the *Bismarck* – and more recently the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* – confirmed to Adolf Hitler that battleships “have had their day”. Perhaps they would be sent to Norway – but there was every chance that they might also be broken up, their guns mounted ashore and their crews sent to U-boats.

Such ‘ifs’ were, of course, dependent on the biggest if of all: *if the ships reach Germany safely*.

Secrecy and surprise were fundamental to the success of Operation Cerberus, as the breakout would be codenamed. The ships would leave Brest at night to avoid being detected by British air and naval forces, and charge up the Channel, passing Dover in daylight.

But were the ships up to such a dash? Erich Raeder doubted it. With their ships being laid up so long, crews were rusty. They needed training – and training at sea at that.

No, said Hitler – who knew little, if anything, of life at sea. If the ships began training, the British would soon be alerted through their extensive network of spies. That could only lead to more air raids and the three heavy ships would be

Continued on page ii





Continued from page i  
damaged once again.

“The only possibility is a surprise breakthrough with no previous indications that it is to take place,” Hitler insisted.

There was another prerequisite: air cover. The ships needed an aerial umbrella from daylight – somewhere off the Cotentin peninsula – to nightfall, off the Rhine estuary.

The Luftwaffe could provide such an umbrella – Operation *Donnerkeil* (Thunderbolt) – but even by committing every available fighter in France and Germany, some 250 Messerschmitt 109s, twin-engined long-range Messerschmitt 110s and the new Focke-Wulf 190s – it could not guarantee round-the-clock cover.

Germany’s senior fighter pilot, the cigar-loving Adolf Galland, promised his men would “give their all – they know what is at stake”. But he could not promise success. “We need total surprise – and a bit of luck to boot.” Adolf Hitler took the fighter pilot to one side. “Most of my decisions have been bold,” he told Galland. “Only those who accept the dangers deserve luck.”

Long before Adolf Hitler decided on a breakout through the Channel, the Admiralty had suspected he might take such a gamble. Over the winter of 1941-42, there had been growing intelligence to suggest the Brest surface ships were being readied for action: gunnery crews were being sent to the Baltic for training while the vessels themselves were making short forays from Brest to work-up. They might lunge once again into the Atlantic to strike at Britain’s supply lines – but the Admiralty thought it more likely that the trio would “break eastwards up the Channel and so to their home ports”. They would, of course, have to be stopped.

But in the Channel, the most powerful navy in Europe had little to challenge the three German heavy ships – and certainly nothing gun for gun. Plymouth, Portsmouth, Portland and Chatham all proved every bit as vulnerable as Brest to aerial attack.

That vulnerability, compounded by the Royal Navy’s global mission – the Battle of the Atlantic, Russian convoys, the struggle in the Mediterranean and the new and terrible conflict in the Far East – left Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay, the senior naval officer at Dover, with meagre forces to halt any breakout: half a dozen destroyers and a similar number of torpedo boats.

Ramsay, architect of the Dunkirk evacuation, could call upon the forces of the RAF – Fighter, Bomber and Coastal Command – and half a dozen Fleet Air Arm Swordfish torpedo bombers, to be transferred to RAF Manston near Ramsgate.

And that was pretty much all that was allocated to Operation Fuller, the yang to Cerberus’ yin.

Still, Ramsay and his staff set about planning to stop the Germans. The motor boats and Swordfish would launch a co-ordinated attack to cripple the ships, destroyers would then close in to deal further blows, while the RAF would rain bombs from above, protected by a shield of fighters.



● ‘The English are now throwing their mothball navy at us’... One of the six Swordfish disintegrates as it plunges into the sea and (left) the choppy w

snow, very cold, bitter days,” Edgar Lee remembered 65 years later – the inexperienced squadron practised patrols in the dark. “With the protection of darkness the Swordfish will have a chance of delivering their attacks and getting away,” a staff officer assured the naval aviators. But it would, he conceded, “be pretty fierce when it starts.”

For two days HMS Sealion had lurked in the waters off Brest. Hurriedly dispatched from Gosport to stand guard off Brittany in case the Germans should emerge, the submarine had fought against the strong tides ripping from Biscay to the Channel through the narrows between Brest and the Finistère archipelago. For despite Hitler’s instructions to the contrary, the Brest warships were making sporadic forays outside the safety of the port to conduct trials and exercises. News reached British shores.

So far Sealion’s patrol had proved fruitless: no sign of the German trio. The boat moved to the edge of the channel leading out of Brest harbour in the hope of finding richer pickings. After dark on February 9, the submarine surfaced in the hope of catching the Germans sailing.

The ships did not come. But a Luftwaffe Do217 bomber did, sweeping over the bay on a routine patrol. Sealion dived – but the game was up. She was subjected to depth charge attack, rocking but not damaging the boat. It was clear to her captain that the waters off Brest were unsafe. He took Sealion further out to sea.

The next day Adolf Galland’s fighters completed their final sweep of the Channel. On eight days between January 22 and February 10, he sent his aircraft aloft – not too many to arouse British suspicions, but enough to prove that the aerial umbrella would work. His pilots knew nothing of their missions – these were just routine patrols.

With the *Donnerkeil* practices complete, Galland was summoned to the Palais du Luxembourg, the Luftwaffe’s sumptuous French headquarters in the heart of Paris. The weather forecast for the next day, Thursday February 12, was far from encouraging, for flying especially – worsening through much of the hours of daylight until a front passed – but the Navy decided that Cerberus should begin that night, passing through the Channel on the 12th. It could, of course, postpone the breakout by 24 hours... but superstitious sailors did not relish the prospect of carrying out the operation on Friday 13.

From Paris, Galland flew to the Pas de Calais to brief his front-line fighter commanders on the breakout and handed them sealed envelopes containing detailed instructions for *Donnerkeil*. News of the mission “hit them like a bomb”, but despite the

surprise, they voiced their enthusiasm for the mission.

While Adolf Galland was briefing his commanders, Joseph Goebbels was closeted with Hitler in the gaudy but imposing Reich Chancellery in Berlin’s government quarter. The Propaganda Minister found his Führer rather unsettled; he had returned to the German capital for the state funeral of his friend and engineer Fritz Todt, killed three days earlier in a mysterious plane crash.

Todt’s death “has badly shaken him”, the Propaganda Minister observed. Also weighing on Hitler’s mind was the impending breakout by his warships at Brest. “We’re all shaking in case something happens to them,” Goebbels recorded in his voluminous diary. “It would be dreadful if one of these ships were to suffer the same fate as the Bismarck.”

After a week of trying to bring his scratch squadron up to operational status, Eugene Esmonde had been given the day off to go to London.

The 32-year-old had more than a dozen years’ flying experience under his belt: five in the RAF, a similar number as a civilian pilot for Imperial Airways before donning uniform once more on the eve of war, this time in the fledgling Fleet Air Arm.

Esmonde knew what it meant to lead obsolete Swordfish against German capital ships; he had guided the torpedo bombers of 825 squadron against the Bismarck eight months previously. He had done so in the dark, in foul weather, and in the face of ferocious flak – and he had scored a hit; a torpedo struck Hitler’s flagship.

For his actions that night, Esmonde was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. This Wednesday he would receive his medal from George VI at Buckingham Palace.

In Brest, the captains of the Prinz Eugen and Gneisenau joined their counterpart from the Scharnhorst in the admiral’s cabin on the flagship. It had fallen to Otto Ciliax to lead the three ships up the Channel – although he had little belief in the mission, less still the reasons for abandoning the Atlantic coast.

The 50-year-old admiral, *Befehlshaber der Schlachtschiffe* (Commander of Battleships), was not an especially popular leader – a rather dour figure known by some as the *Der schwarze Zar* (Black Tsar). Ciliax was a stern disciplinarian who expected his orders to be followed to the letter. This counted more than ever now, he told Otto Fein of the Gneisenau, Helmuth Brinkmann of the Prinz Eugen, and his own flag captain, Kurt Hoffmann.

“It is a bold and unheard of operation for the German Navy,” Ciliax impressed upon them. “It will succeed if these orders are strictly obeyed.”

Beyond the narrowest circle, the

crews of the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen knew nothing of their impending charge up the Channel. They believed they were heading *south*, not north – pith helmets and barrels of lubricating oil were being stored aboard. Nor did they believe their departure from Brest imminent. Preparations for one of the most important dates in the German calendar, Shrove Monday – on February 16 – were in full swing. It would be celebrated in the traditional manner – with a costume party ashore. More pressing for the ships’ officers were two days in Paris as guests of Admiral Alfred Saalwächter, the *Kriegsmarine*’s commander in France. Lists were circulated with the names of officers who were to attend a dinner with Saalwächter, followed by a day’s hunting in Rambouillet on the edge of the French capital.

At 7pm the alarms sounded aboard the Prinz Eugen. *Seeklarmachen*. Ready for sea. Gun crews manned their turrets while a tug was brought alongside to shepherd the cruiser out of harbour.

She would be the last of the three ships to sail. Scharnhorst, as flagship, would lead, followed by her sister, then the Prinz. Once in open water, they would sail in *Kielwasserlinie* – in line astern – with a protective shield of half a dozen destroyers, more than a dozen torpedo boats, and fast patrol craft – S-boats to the Germans, E-boats to the British.

In half an hour, the force was ready to sail. But suddenly the alarms sounded once more: air raid. For the next 30 minutes the sailors waited tensely, while smoke screens billowed across the harbour. Five parachute flares lit up the entrance to the port. But the handful of bombs dropped by the Wellingtons fell over the city, not the harbour.

It was another hour before the all-clear sounded – and 15 minutes more before the red lamp on Scharnhorst’s bridge flickered through the gloom. *ABLEGEN*. Cast off. It took another hour to clear the narrow entrances to Brest. By 10.30pm, the tugs had done their duty and turned about.

On the bridge of the Scharnhorst, Officer of the Watch *Kapitänleutnant* Wilhelm Wolf asked the ship’s navigator for the course to steer. “*Steuerbord drei vier null*,” Helmuth Gießler told him. *Turn starboard to 340 degrees*. Wolf queried the course – it would take the ships out into the Channel. “The course is correct,” Gießler grinned. “Tomorrow you’ll be at home with your wife.”

The rest of Scharnhorst’s crew still knew nothing of their mission – or their destination. Only a little after midnight – as the force cleared the narrow and hazardous waters between Ushant and the Brittany peninsula and

increased speed to 27 knots – did the loudspeakers come to life. They broadcast Otto Ciliax’s order of the day. “The Führer has summoned us to new tasks in other waters,” he told them. The force was to sail east through the Channel to the German Bight – a difficult mission, one which demanded a supreme effort from every man. “The Führer expects from each of us unwavering duty. It is our duty as warriors and seamen to fulfil these expectations.”

Each night a handful of Hudson bombers of Coastal Command patrolled the skies from the Pas de Calais to the tip of the Brittany peninsula, using their radar to sweep the Atlantic and Channel for movement. Tonight was no exception.

Except that tonight was an exception. For the radar on the first Hudson failed mid-Channel. It returned to base in St Eval on the north Cornish coast. By the time a replacement arrived off Brest, Ciliax was gone.

A second Hudson, due to scour the waters between Ushant and Brest fared no better. Its radar failed. It too turned for home – 90 minutes before Ciliax sailed. No replacement was sent.

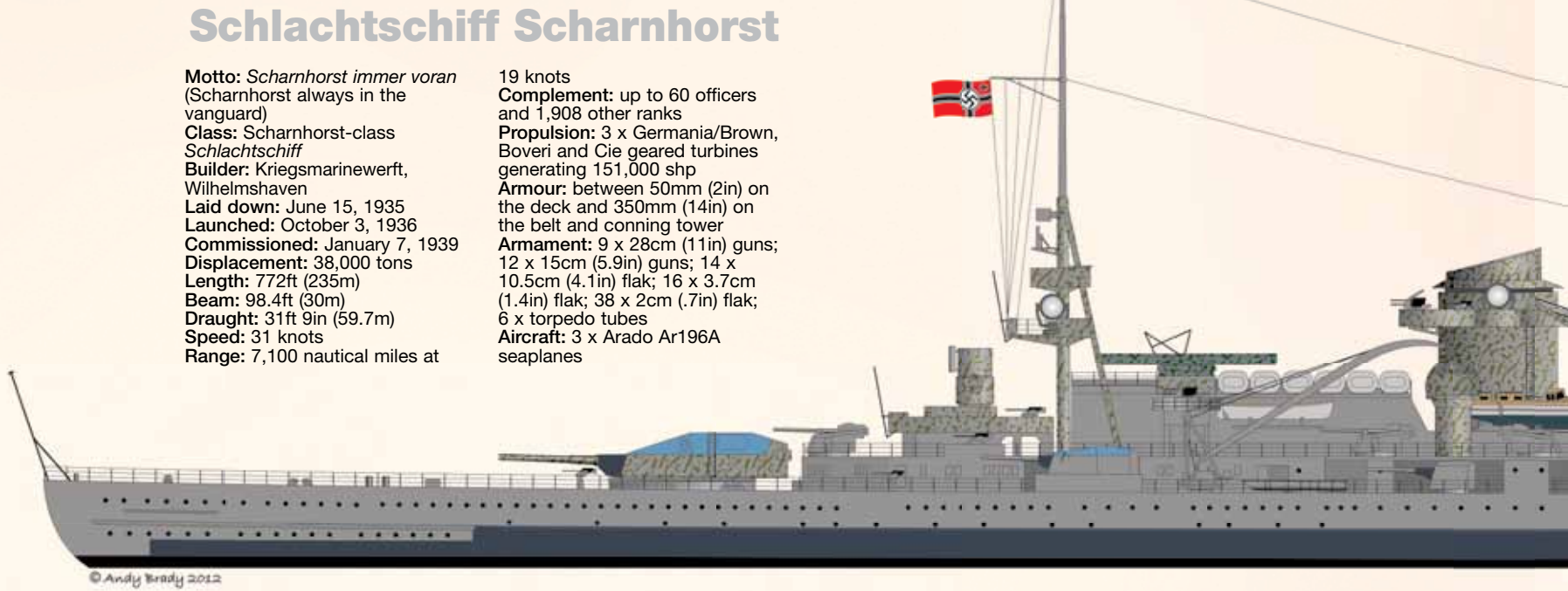
In a hotel near Versailles, a bleary-eyed *Oberleutnant* Gerhard Krumbholz had been summoned to the telephone to take a call from his commander. The Luftwaffe observer had barely returned from a lengthy reconnaissance flight in a Junkers 88 bomber over the English south coast, grabbed some food and retired to bed.

Still dressed in his pyjamas, Krumbholz took down some coded instructions, woke his three other crew members then sat down to decipher the message: before first light they would be over the Channel once more, this time providing cover for the breakout of the battleships.

At least the radar on a third RAF reconnaissance aircraft was functioning. So far this night it had completed two sweeps of the Channel between Boulogne and Le Havre. *Nothing*. It would have made a third, but with the weather closing in on its base, it was recalled early. At 6.15am on Thursday February 12, it set course for Thorney Island.

Adolf Galland had slept little. A good 90 minutes before dawn he had opened his aerial umbrella, sending night fighters over the warships. The Me110s flew just a few feet above the waves to avoid being picked up by British radar stations across the Channel.

Aboard the Prinz Eugen, individual sailors were released from their action stations to grab food from the galley or to enjoy a cigarette.



## Schlachtschiff Scharnhorst

**Motto:** *Scharnhorst immer voran* (Scharnhorst always in the vanguard)  
**Class:** Scharnhorst-class  
**Schlachtschiff**  
**Builder:** Kriegsmarinewerft, Wilhelmshaven  
**Laid down:** June 15, 1935  
**Launched:** October 3, 1936  
**Commissioned:** January 7, 1939  
**Displacement:** 38,000 tons  
**Length:** 772ft (235m)  
**Beam:** 98.4ft (30m)  
**Draught:** 31ft 9in (59.7m)  
**Speed:** 31 knots  
**Range:** 7,100 nautical miles at

19 knots  
**Complement:** up to 60 officers and 1,908 other ranks  
**Propulsion:** 3 x Germana/Brown, Boveri and Cie geared turbines generating 151,000 shp  
**Armour:** between 50mm (2in) on the deck and 350mm (14in) on the belt and conning tower  
**Armament:** 9 x 28cm (11in) guns; 12 x 15cm (5.9in) guns; 14 x 10.5cm (4.1in) flak; 16 x 3.7cm (1.4in) flak; 38 x 2cm (.7in) flak; 6 x torpedo tubes  
**Aircraft:** 3 x Arado Ar196A seaplanes





aters of the Channel crash over the forecastle of the Prinz Eugen as she races along at 27 knots

On the cruiser’s bridge, *Kapitänleutnant* Paul Schmalenbach stared into the half light of a dawning February day. He watched as the screen of destroyers formed a ring around the three capital ships. They were soon joined by torpedo boats and then, as the day lightened, Me109s, the twin-engined Me110s and Focke Wulf 190s. Long before they roared over the ships, their recognition signals blinked reassuringly in the gloomy sky.

At Parkestone Quay in Harwich, the ships of the 16th Destroyer Flotilla slipped their moorings and headed into the North Sea. It promised to be a routine, if useful, day of training: a spot of practice with their 4.7in and 4in guns against a towed target

Gerhard Krumbholz was still trying to locate the task force. His Junkers 88 had taken off before dawn and headed north for the Channel. “Apart from the shifting sea and the blue, almost cloudless sky above it, there is nothing to see,” he wrote.

Also airborne in the skies of the Channel that morning were a pair of Heinkel 111 bombers – specially fitted with jamming equipment to fool the radar stations dotted along the south coast of England. To the operators of the sets, on the cathode ray screens the two Heinkels looked like 50 aircraft.

The flight by the two bombers was just one part of an elaborate deception mission to block and obfuscate the British this day. Land-based devices joined in.

For the most part it succeeded. The RAF stations reported interference, or simply switched off. But not all – some broadcast at frequencies the Germans could not block. And not everything could be hidden.

For as the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen moved, their umbrella moved with them, flying constantly in circles to maintain contact with the ships – and there was no hiding Galland’s flying circus as it barrelled its way up the Channel.

At first these movements had been dismissed as training exercises, or perhaps a large-scale fighter sweep. But by mid-morning there were some operators and staff officers who began to suspect German ships were on the move. The RAF ordered a handful of Spitfires up to take a look.

*Unteroffizier* Willi Quante, in a Messerschmitt 109, was on his second sortie of the day. His first flight – to Dover and back – had passed “without detecting anything worth reporting”. His second mission was proving to be equally uneventful. “Outside of five German destroyers, acting as a forward screen, we detected no other activity.”

Gerhard Krumbholz’s bomber has now been airborne for well over two hours. Nothing. No German aircraft.

No Tommies. In the air or on the sea. But shortly before 10am Krumbholz and his crew spied three smoke trails in front of them, silhouetted against the weak February sun. There was, Krumbholz recalled, “jubilation on board” at the sight of the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen. He continued:

**Majestically and calmly they move through the turbulent sea, surrounded by numerous security vessels, destroyers and minesweepers. Motor torpedo boats hunt protectively on all sides. Often the boats nearly disappear in the heavy breakers. German fighter planes circle over the naval unit heading for the narrow Channel. The hearts of the four comrades beat faster.**

**Never before had Germany’s power at sea and in the air been as clear and present for them as it was today. They could hardly get enough of looking at this glorious picture full of strength and greatness.**

Having located the formation, the Junkers changed course and headed for the South Coast of England. *Nothing*. “The Tommies,” wrote Krumbholz, “appear to be asleep.”

In his command post at Le Touquet on the Channel coast, Adolf Galland had reached the same conclusion. “For two hours – in broad daylight – German warships had been sailing along the English coast along a route no foe had dared take since the 17th Century. The silence was almost sinister.”

The sleeping giant was about to awaken... but it did so lethargically.

The first concrete proof that ‘something was up’ in the Channel was provided by blips on a coastal radar screen which picked up a concentration of ships roughly two dozen miles off Hastings.

Five minutes later, the first RAF reconnaissance aircraft sighted the naval formation – but failed to identify them. It was 11.05am before the German breakout was confirmed... but maintaining radio silence – as per orders – it was only when the Spitfire which found the ships was on the ground, at 11.09, that the slow wheels of Operation Fuller began to turn.

The initial response was far from impressive. It was almost 11.30 by the time the information filtered down to the one sailor who could stop the breakout. The news came – with typical Royal Navy understatement – as “an unplesant surprise” to Bertram Ramsay.

Ramsay would do all he could – but he was reluctant to throw half a dozen biplanes against the German ships by day, however much fighter cover the Royal Air Force could provide. Ramsay rang the First Sea Lord for advice.

The instructions of Admiral Sir Dudley Pound were unequivocal:

**The Navy will attack the enemy whenever and wherever he is to be found.**

At RAF Manston, the station commander handed Eugene Esmonde the telephone. First Ramsay’s aerial liaison officer spoke to the Swordfish commander. Then Admiral Ramsay himself came on the line: “This is going to be a difficult job,” he told Esmonde. “You volunteered for a night attack, it’s now a daylight attack. It’s up to you. I shall not think any less of you if you withdraw.”

Eugene Esmonde felt a bounden duty to attack the German force. He laid down only one condition: fighter cover. The RAF promised five squadrons to protect his sluggish bombers. “Tell them to be here by 12.25 – get the fighters to us on time, for the love of God.”

Even with fighter cover, Esmonde felt this was a one-way mission. He never voiced his misgivings – but his half-hearted salute to Manston’s commander, Tom Gleave, as the RAF man wished him luck spoke volumes.

**He knew what he was going into [wrote Gleave]. But it was his duty. His face was tense and white. It was the face of a man already dead. It shocked me as nothing has done since.**

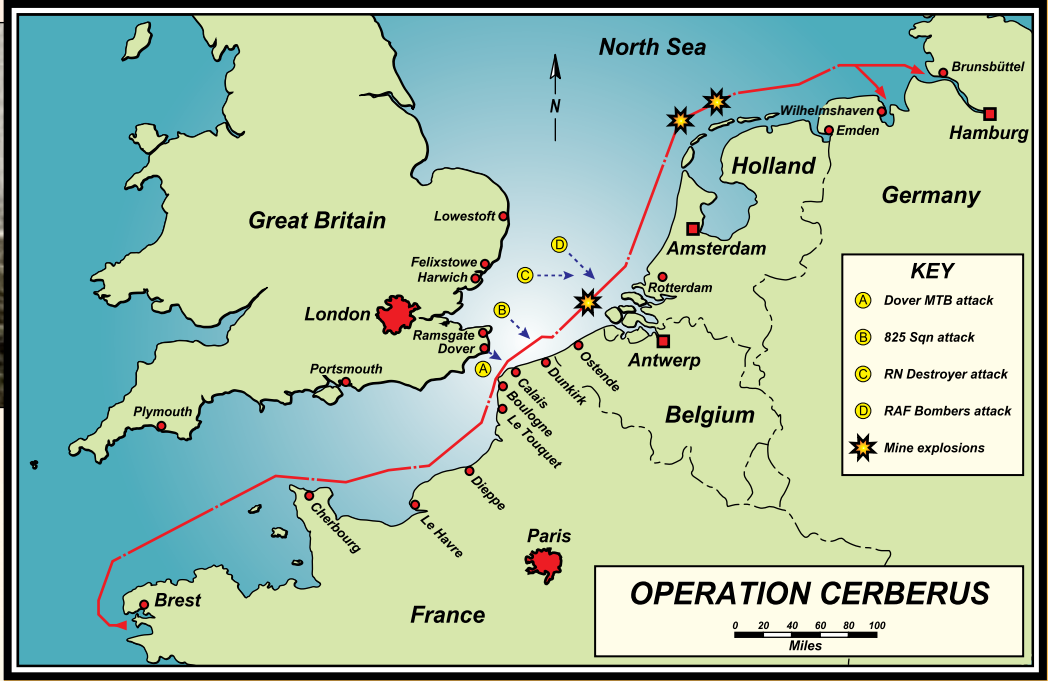
As Eugene Esmonde and his men donned Mae Wests and headed out to their Swordfish, the other pieces of Operation Fuller were slotting into place.

Shortly after mid-day the coastal batteries along the Kent coast cleared their throats. They were not firing blind – they were firing at targets guided by their radar. But they were firing at maximum range – 20 miles. It took nearly a minute for the 9.2in shells to travel from their barrels at South Foreland, four miles up the coast from Dover. For the next half hour the guns fired spasmodically, sending more than 30 shells into the Channel sky... and plunging harmlessly into the sea.

Heading “flat out” of Dover Harbour, Lt Cdr Nigel Pumphrey tried to shepherd his five motor torpedo boats. He should have had six, but one failed to start and remained behind in what had been the ferry dock before the war.

Pumphrey’s mission was as thankless as Eugene Esmonde’s. His boats were old, slower than the German capital ships – to say nothing of the escorting E-boats. The weather in the Channel – winds upwards of Force 6 and waves easily of five or six feet – was beyond the motor boats’ operating limits. As for actually attacking the foe, the torpedoes were not supposed to be fired above a Force 3.

At 12.25pm precisely, six Swordfish



– codenamed F, G, H, K, L and M – with 18 souls – one pilot, one observer and one telegraphist air gunner apiece – lumbered into the Kentish sky and sluggishly climbed to 1,500 feet where they circled for four minutes awaiting the five RAF squadrons.

Only one appeared. Ten aircraft. Spitfires. The other four squadrons failed to materialise. With time pressing, Esmonde signalled the other five torpedo bombers. They set an easterly course and struck out over the Channel, dropping to 50ft. They expected to run into the German warships two dozen miles east of Ramsgate.

Beneath “grey and scudding clouds” telegraphist Reg Mitchell and his shipmates on MTB 48 saw the Swordfish pass overhead – at the very moment the German Fleet came into view. At that very moment Mitchell’s radio gave up, a fact he reported to his skipper, Tony Law. “Come up top and grab a rifle or something,” Law advised.

The escorting Spitfires of 72 Squadron were struggling to provide cover for the plodding torpedo bombers and weaved constantly to prevent losing contact.

The weaving was of little use. Fifteen – or maybe 20 – Messerschmitts and Focke-Wulfs dived out of the clouds, past the Spitfires and pounced on the tails of all six Swordfish, damaging at least three of the biplanes.

From MTB 48, Reg Mitchell could clearly see the German fighters with their landing gear down and flaps extended, and he could hear the pilots gunning their engines to prevent stalling – and prevent them overshooting the Swordfish. To Mitchell it seemed the Germans “were queuing up to get a shot at them”.

Whilst trying to keep the Focke-Wulfs and Messerschmitts at bay, Spitfire pilot Michael Crombie’s eye was caught by Esmonde’s bomber fending off repeated waves of attacks, its gunner PO William ‘Clints’ Clinton responding to the 20mm cannon of the German fighters with his much-less-potent Lewis machine-gun. When tracer set the tailplane alight, the senior rating left his cockpit and clambered along the fuselage to beat the flames out before returning to his seat to continue the struggle against the foe.

For seven or eight minutes, all six Swordfish came under sustained attack – and yet all six were still airborne. Perhaps they might succeed. They pressed on and when the German warships came into sight, Esmonde turned towards them.

A couple of Me109s buzzed Reg Mitchell’s torpedo boat. They were barely 40ft above the water – low enough for the 18-year-old to clearly see the German pilots. They grinned at the crew of MTB48 – but didn’t open fire. “They obviously all thought we were pathetic and insignificant,” Mitchell recalled.

Through the loudspeakers of the Prinz Eugen a tinny voice: *Aircraft, bearing 240 degrees, four low-flying aircraft, biplanes, torpedo bombers!* The broadcast, Paul Schmalenbach recalled, “electrified” the cruiser’s crew.

On the bridge of the Scharnhorst, Otto Ciliax was unperturbed. “The English are now throwing their mothball navy at us,” he observed acidly

In aircraft ‘G’, observer Edgar Lee watched as the anti-aircraft – or flak – guns on the escorting forces opened fire. The guns did not belch with full fury, however, for fear of hitting their own fighters.

Even with subdued fury, the German fire was fearful. The lower left wing of Esmonde’s Swordfish was all but shot away, his gunner dead, the canvas on the fuselage torn away, yet the rugged bomber flew on. It closed to within 3,000 yards – a little over one and a half miles – of the heavy ships.

It got no further. It plunged into the Channel. Edgar Lee thought it was shot down by a fighter. Prinz Eugen’s flak gunners were convinced they had downed the Swordfish. Nor is there agreement over whether Esmonde launched his torpedo. If he did, it failed to find a target.

Swordfish ‘G’ and ‘L’, following Esmonde, fared little better. L flew so low that bullets ricocheted off the waves and peppered the fuselage. Part of the upper wing caught fire, two engine cylinders were shot away, so too the floor beneath gunner Don Bunce who was forced to brace himself against the fuselage to avoid falling into the Channel. As for L’s pilot,

S/Lt Pat Kingsmill was shot in the back, his observer ‘Mac’ Samples was also wounded.

Once again the Swordfish demonstrated its legendary ability to take punishment. It flew on. Bunce brought down at least one German fighter while Kingsmill turned the bomber 360 degrees to evade the Luftwaffe before bringing his aircraft to bear on the Prinz Eugen.

There is no dispute about Kingsmill’s torpedo. It launched and passed just astern of the heavy cruiser which moved violently as it took evasive action.

As for the aircraft, it turned for home but would never get there. Another hit detonated the aircraft’s distress flares and possibly wrecked the dinghy. With no hope of returning to base, Kingsmill sought to ditch. He was just about to do so when he realised the motor boats swarming just a few hundred yards away were German, not British. He continued until the Bristol Pegasus engine finally gave up then set the Swordfish down in the sea. The three crew spent ten minutes in the water before a British MTB rescued them.

Swordfish ‘G’ had also got its torpedo away after an equally horrific run-in. Pilot Brian Rose was badly wounded in the back. He and observer Edgar Lee were badly affected by fumes from the punctured fuel tank. At around 2,000 yards from the main German force, Rose released his torpedo, probably at the Gneisenau, observed its run briefly, then turned. The aircraft passed over the outer screen of destroyers but got no further, crashing into the sea. Lee freed himself, then the badly-injured Rose, helping the pilot into the dinghy. He could do nothing for gunner Ambrose Johnson, slumped over his gun and trapped in his seat. The Channel swallowed the Swordfish whole, taking Johnson with it.

The fate of the remaining three torpedo bombers is even more bleak. Lee last saw the three aircraft pressing home their attack on the Prinz Eugen, jinking wildly to avoid the flak. All three were shot out of the sky. Not one man survived and only one body was ever recovered.

Thus ended the Fleet Air Arm’s ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’. It achieved nothing, save to add a bitter but brave chapter to the annals of naval aviation. Having brushed aside the ‘mothball navy’ just minutes before, the icy Otto Ciliax reflected on the attack. The “handful of ancient planes” had been “piloted by men whose bravery surpasses any other action by either side that day”.

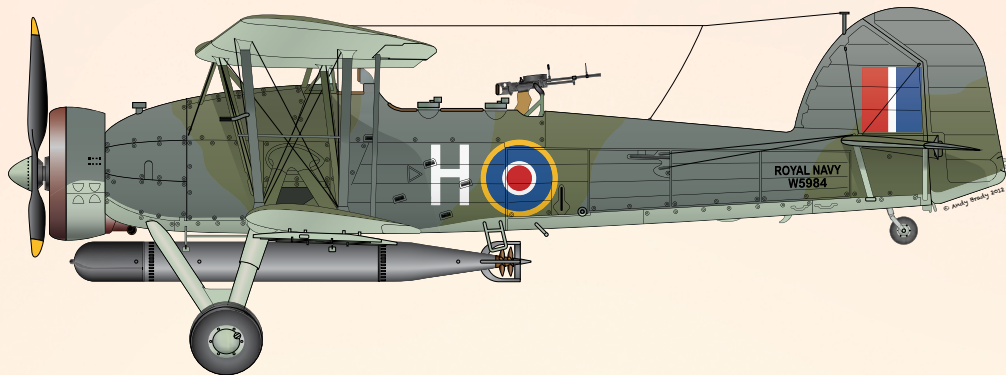
Nigel Pumphrey’s torpedo boats proved no more adept at penetrating the screen of destroyers and E-boats. Three craft got their ‘fish’ away – at maximum range, 3,500-4,000 yards. Not one torpedo hit home.

“At this juncture a large waterspout appeared close to us, then another and another,” recalled Reg Mitchell on MTB48. The boat was being engaged by the German destroyer Friedrich Ihn, bearing down rapidly on the small British force. “We turned around and put our feet down to get out of it,” said Mitchell. The craft made for the shallows of the Goodwin Sands. The destroyer could not follow them there.

The coastal batteries, the motor torpedo boats, the six antiquated Swordfish had all failed. Cerberus was through the gates of Hell – but the ships were not yet safe.

Aboard the Prinz Eugen, the





## Fairey Swordfish Mk1

**Crew:** Three (pilot, observer, and telegraphist/rear gunner)  
**Length:** 35ft 8in (10.87m)  
**Wingspan:** 45ft 6in (13.87m)  
**Height:** 12ft 4in (3.76m)  
**Wing area:** 607 square ft (56.4 square metres)  
**Empty weight:** 4,195lb (1,900kg)  
**Loaded weight:** 7,720lb (3,500kg)  
**Engine:** 1 x Bristol Pegasus IIIM.3 radial engine generating 690 hp  
**Maximum speed:** 121 knots (139 mph/224 kmh) at 4,750ft (1,450m)

**Range:** 475 nautical miles (546 miles/879 km) carrying a torpedo  
**Endurance:** 5h 42m  
**Service ceiling:** 19,250 ft (5,870m)  
**Rate of climb:** Ten minutes to 5,000 ft (1,520m)  
**Armament:** 1 x 1,670lb (760kg) torpedo or 1,500lb (700 kg) mine under fuselage or 1,500lb bombs under fuselage and wings;  
 1 x fixed, forward-firing .303in (7.7 mm) Vickers machine-gun;  
 1 x .303in (7.7 mm) Lewis or Vickers K machine-gun in rear cockpit

### Continued from page iii

*Matrosen* – matelots – took comfort that the weather gods were on their side. “The weather grew worse,” Paul Schmalenbach recalled. “Our native North Sea greeted us with light rain and rough seas. On top of that, visibility became ever worse; the cloud ceiling dropped to just a few hundred metres.”

Edgar Lee and Brian Rose pitched up and down in their dinghy for a good 90 minutes. The action had long since passed – the Germans were approaching the Scheldt estuary, a good 50 miles away. With the Channel devoid of the foe, Lee fired two distress signals and awaited rescue from motor torpedo boats, be they German or British – whichever came first. “Better a PoW than float about in this oggin for much longer.”

So far it had been a useful, if otherwise uneventful, Thursday off Orfordness for the ships of the 16th Destroyer Flotilla. As HMS Worcester prepared to take over target-towing duties, the flotilla leader, HMS Campbell, received a terse signal: *Enemy cruisers passing Boulogne, speed about 20 knots. Proceed in execution of previous orders.*

With a combined age of nearly 120 years, the five ships – Campbell, Vivacious, Worcester, Whitshed and Mackay – were better suited to convoy duties than chasing German capital ships.

Flotilla commander Mark Pizey chose to intercept the enemy off the Hook of Holland and signalled his intentions to the rest of his destroyers.

Aboard HMS Worcester, a sub lieutenant hurried down from the bridge with news for his shipmates. “Roll on my VC! We are to intercept the pocket battleships!”

A torpedo boat had sighted Edgar Lee’s flare and closed in on his dinghy. *Was it friend or foe?* Lee wondered. “Then I saw it was flying the Jolly Roger and realised that no German would have that sense of humour.”

So far, Otto Ciliax’s ships had run the gauntlet unscathed. There were reports of half a dozen warships steaming through the North Sea to intercept – but so far there was no sight of them, nor of fresh waves of Swordfish. The *Matrosen* saw only the deepening gloom of a waning February day.

And so with no foe evident, the shock was all the greater when the Scharnhorst was rocked by a tremendous explosion. The battle-cruiser shuddered to a halt having run over a mine previously laid by the RAF.

Damage-control parties minimised the flooding to a couple of compartments and within half an hour had restored power to the *Schlachtschiff*.

But by then Scharnhorst was no longer flagship. Ciliax had abandoned her with his staff, transferring to a destroyer. Not a few members of the ship’s company thought his actions precipitous.

While the Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen continued on their way, Scharnhorst sat dead in the water, and Mark Pizey’s aged destroyers made best speed to intercept Ciliax’s ships, the second act of the Channel battle was already under way.

After its initially lacklustre response to the German breakout,

by mid-afternoon the RAF was throwing bombers at the enemy as it hastened up the Belgian coast.

More than 250 aircraft took off to attack the trio – Wellingtons and Manchesters (forerunner of the more successful Lancaster), four-engined Halifaxes, twin-engined Beaufort torpedo bombers. And while it had failed to provide adequate cover for Eugene Esmonde’s ill-fated Swordfish, the RAF sent up fighters *en masse* – nearly 400 in all – to shield the bombers.

For all this effort, fewer than 40 actually found the Germans. The men on the Prinz Eugen tried to follow the aerial battle. “Flashes of light and explosive clouds painted the grey sky with colour,” Paul Schmalenbach recalled. Two fighters chasing a Wellington bomber here. A Messerschmitt and Spitfire locked in a dance of death there. A four-engined bomber plunged out of the sky. The ship’s flak only opened fire when there was no risk to German aircraft or ships.

HMS Campbell had negotiated North Sea minefields and survived bombing raids first from a Junkers 88, then from an RAF Hampden (neither hit), before a flight of Messerschmitts circled hesitantly a couple of times before departing. “It was becoming increasingly apparent that the sense of confusion was not all one-sided,” recalled telegraphist John Keith.

His captain was “beginning to give up hope” of encountering the Germans until, a little after 3.15pm, a couple of large echoes appeared on the radar screen 20,000 yards – more than 11 miles – away. The two large blips – Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen – were soon joined by smaller echoes, their escorting destroyers.

It was another dozen minutes before the flotilla could physically see the German ships. The British destroyers increased speed and closed on the foe.

Just above the waves Messerschmitts grappled with Beaufort torpedo bombers while higher up there was a tangle of Dorniers, Me110s, Hampdens, Spitfires, the occasional Halifax bomber and twin-engined Wellingtons.

The Luftwaffe thought the destroyers below friendly and fired recognition signals, while the RAF crews were convinced the flotilla was German.

The only people ignorant of this general mêlée were the crews of the Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen. Their guns remained silent – but not for long.

“I could clearly see the vivid flashes of their guns as they fired,” John Keith remembered. “Great columns of water erupted into the air off either bow and large projectiles roared close overhead.” To the young seaman these passing shells sounded like express trains.

Aboard Worcester, pom-pom officer S/Lt Bill Wedge could make out “dark shapes in the misty distance”. Despite green seas crashing over the forecastle and stern, the veteran destroyer’s main 4.7in guns opened up, their crews up to their knees at times in water.

It was now around 3.40pm. The charge of the destroyers had closed the range to under 3,500 yards – possibly as close as 2,400. When an unexploded shell crashed into the sea “like a porpoise” just ahead of the Campbell, Capt Pizey took it as the

signal to fire his torpedoes and turn about.

Pizey’s ships fired their ‘fish’ and turned about. All except the Worcester. She continued “for what seemed an age” until the ‘fish’ were finally fired from her tubes – just 2,000 yards from the Germans.

She paid a heavy price for her death ride. For ten minutes she was straddled and hit repeatedly. Four salvos in succession struck her. Two boiler rooms were knocked out and the Worcester lay dead in the water. Her captain, Lt Cdr Ernest ‘Dreamy’ Coates, gave the order ‘prepare to abandon ship’. In the confusion of battle, and with many of his men suffering from concussion, his instructions were misheard or misinterpreted. Many men – the wounded and uninjured – took to Carley Floats and drifted out into the North Sea.

Above, a Junkers 88 circled but did not attack the stricken Worcester. The RAF did, trying to torpedo her.

Below, the surgeon and sick bay attendants tended to the wounded, while the engineers finally restored some power and began to make for home.

As Worcester got under way again, more shapes out of the growing gloom – but not German destroyers, rather British. Campbell and Vivacious had returned and promptly set about rescuing the men in the water.

The motor boat which had plucked Edgar Lee and Brian Rose from the Channel safely delivered them to Dover, where the pilot was promptly whisked off to hospital. As for the 20-year-old Lee, he was taken to Admiral Ramsay’s headquarters to “thaw out”. He was laid on a stretcher and thrust into a tunnel-shaped piece of corrugated iron with a row of 100-watt lightbulbs fixed to it. It was, Lee remembered, “a wonderful piece of kit, absolutely basic but very effective”. Once warmed up, he was shown into Ramsay’s office. For the next hour, the young aviator and the experienced admiral were closeted. “This man was surrounded by absolute mayhem on his doorstep and yet he could give time to put my mind at rest,” Lee recalled 65 years later. “I thought that was the sign of a really great man.”

Edgar Lee’s report of the action – his battle lasted no more than half an hour – left Bertram Ramsay profoundly depressed. Had he known only one squadron of fighters, not the promised five, was available as escort for the Swordfish he “would have told Lt Cdr Esmonde to remain on the ground. Indeed, I would have forbidden the flight as an order.”

In the North Sea murk, the Prinz Eugen had lost sight of the Gneisenau, which was now leading the charge up the Channel. Visibility was so poor that her crew could not see the torpedo and light bombers trying to attack the cruiser, only hear their engines. The closest the bombs fell was 50 metres, but one crewman was killed as a plane’s machine-guns raked the ship. The flak responded with a hit to the aircraft’s tailplane. It plunged into the sea as the last flicker of daylight was expunged this Thursday. Darkness once again enveloped the fleeing German ships.

HMS Worcester broke down once more as she struggled back to Harwich. Her engineers again performed miracles and the destroyer



● ‘Such bravery as was his is in keeping with the highest naval traditions’... *The diminutive Lt Cdr Eugene Esmonde (second from left) poses alongside comrades in the shadow of a Swordfish torpedo bomber*

Picture: Fleet Air Arm Museum

limped into port doing nine knots – proudly turning down an offer of assistance from another destroyer.

Like Scharnhorst before her, Gneisenau was suddenly brought to a halt off the Dutch island of Terschelling. A mine, laid by the RAF earlier that day, detonated, ripping a hole near her stern. The damage, unlike Scharnhorst, was relatively superficial. After half an hour’s makeshift repairs, she resumed her journey to the German Bight.

Her older sister was not so fortunate. Lagging behind the rest of the Cerberus force thanks to her earlier mishap, the lucky Scharnhorst was now making 27 knots, racing up a channel between minefields off the Dutch coast. The speed troubled navigator Helmuth Gießler – were another accident to befall the battle-cruiser, it might prove fatal. He suggested slowing down to his captain. Kurt Hoffmann refused. He accepted the risks. “Only God and courage can help us now,” he told Gießler.

Helmuth Gießler was right. As Scharnhorst passed Terschelling, she too hit an aerial mine. The engines failed immediately. So too the lights as the North Sea gushed into engine spaces and the main generator compartment. The battle-cruiser began to drift towards the Dutch shore.

Once again the engineers came to the lucky Scharnhorst’s rescue; in little more than half an hour they had restored power. At 12 knots, she crept through the darkness up the Frisian coast.

Edgar Lee was driven the 20 miles back to Manston from Ramsay’s headquarters. He was now the senior surviving officer of 825 Naval Air Squadron. To him fell the solemn task of sorting out the personal effects of his comrades for their families. With the duty done, he paid a call on the station commander, then headed to the mess for dinner. A deadly hush descended on the dining hall.

As the Scharnhorst slowly made for Wilhelmshaven and Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen steamed for the mouth of the Elbe, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound – the man who had insisted on the suicidal Swordfish attack – was put through to No.10. In his time as First Sea Lord, Pound had informed his premier of good news – the destruction of the Bismarck – but more often than not, bad – the sinking of the Prince of Wales and Repulse was a particular low point. Now, at 1am on Friday February 13, he had bad tidings once more for Churchill. “I’m afraid sir I must report that the enemy battle-cruisers should by now have reached the safety of home waters.”

There was a long, silent pause on the other end of the line before the prime minister spoke. “Why?” he asked, then slammed the phone down.

The German ships had indeed escaped – but they had not yet reached home waters. It was 7am on Friday before Prinz Eugen and Gneisenau arrived in the Elbe estuary. They did so with the feeling, Paul Schmalenbach wrote triumphantly, “of having given our toughest enemy at sea a hefty slap in the face by sailing past his front door – opening on to what he alone claims is called the ‘English’ Channel – without him being able to impede us.”

When the damaged Scharnhorst finally limped into Wilhelmshaven, her sides were lined with ecstatic sailors. When the gangways were across, senior naval and Luftwaffe commanders were invited aboard to review the operation. They deemed it a complete success: the breakout, Adolf Galland wrote, had been “a military sensation of the first order”, and his aerial umbrella “a great and impressive military victory”. His fighters and the ships’ flak had downed more than 40 enemy aircraft for the loss of 17 on the German side. Eleven aircrew and 13 *Matrosen* were dead, and a solitary picket boat (a trawler) had been sunk.

In Berlin, Adolf Hitler was hosting his Norwegian puppet, Vidkun Quisling, for lunch. Just how much of a puppet Quisling was Hitler confided afterwards to Joseph Goebbels. The Norwegian had great plans: to forge a new army and navy and defend his country’s shores. One day, Quisling argued, his country would be free of German troops, yet still stand at Germany’s side. Hitler’s responses were lukewarm and evasive.

The Führer was rather more forthcoming on the subject of the warships’ breakout. He was “very happy” with the outcome of the operation. “Our stock has risen considerably – while that of the British has fallen correspondingly.” With the fall of Singapore imminent perhaps, Hitler mused, Churchill might fall.

Perhaps he might, for the British media bayed for blood when news of the German success reached London. Harking back to the Armada, the editorial in *The Times* fumed:

**Vice Admiral Ciliax has succeeded where the Duke of Sidonia failed. Nothing more mortifying to the pride of sea power has happened in Home Waters since the 17th Century.**

Of course, the Brest flotilla should not have escaped. The British response – exactly as Hitler predicted – had been sluggish, disorganised, belated. Even in this third year of war, liaison between the Air Force and Navy was poor, while the RAF ill-equipped and certainly ill-trained for attacking “fast-moving warships by day”. And while Winston Churchill might have snapped in private at Dudley Pound, publicly he defended *his* Navy. “Where, it is asked, were all the rest of our flotillas?” he told Parliament. “The answer is that they were – and are – out on the approaches from the Atlantic, convoying the food and munitions from the United States without which we cannot live.”

In short, the Navy had too many commitments – and too few ships.

The Germans’ initial self-congratulation quickly faded. The Brest flotilla never did deploy to Norway as intended; damage to Scharnhorst was so bad she would not be fit for duties until the beginning of the following year. Six days before the end of 1943, the Royal Navy sank her off the North Cape.

As for her sister, her damage was largely superficial. By February 26, she was ready to begin trials before deploying to Scandinavia a week later. That night Bomber Command visited Kiel. A bomb penetrated Gneisenau’s armoured deck on her bow and ignited shell propellant. Crew succeeded in flooding most of the magazine to prevent the entire

ship exploding. The resulting blast was sufficient to blow a turret off, wreck the bow and kill more than 100 sailors. Never again did the Gneisenau sail as an operational warship.

Save for one sailor killed, the Prinz Eugen had come through Cerberus unscathed. Engineer Erich Kettermann was laid to rest with full military honours in the small cemetery at Brunsbüttel by the entrance to the Kiel Canal. When the ship’s company returned aboard the cruiser, the Fleet Commander-in-Chief was waiting for the captain. Why hadn’t Helmuth Brinkmann stayed with the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau when they hit mines, but continued on alone? Brinkmann pointed out that his was the only ship to return to Germany undamaged – as ordered. Schniewind smiled and offered the captain a glass of champagne.

Prinz Eugen did not remain undamaged for long. Sent to Norway with the pocket battleship Admiral Scheer and half a dozen destroyers, she was torpedoed by submarine HMS Trident off Trondheim on February 23. The explosion ripped off her stern. Though eventually repaired, the cruiser spent the rest of her career under the swastika as a training ship in the Baltic and floating gunnery platform supporting the crumbling Eastern Front.

And so like so many feats of German arms in the 20th Century’s second global conflagration, the Channel Dash was a tactical triumph but strategic defeat. “The Battle of the Atlantic, as far as our surface forces were concerned, was practically over,” Erich Raeder lamented. Never again would major German warships strike into Atlantic Ocean.

In early April the Channel finally gave up Eugene Esmonde’s body. Still wearing his life jacket, he was washed ashore near the Medway estuary. By then his name was immortal. George VI had already conferred the nation’s highest honour, posthumously, on the squadron commander. The recommendation had come from Bertram Ramsay.

**Such bravery as was his is in keeping with the highest naval traditions and will remain through generations to come a stirring memory.**

## Acknowledgments

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The following books have also proved invaluable:

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